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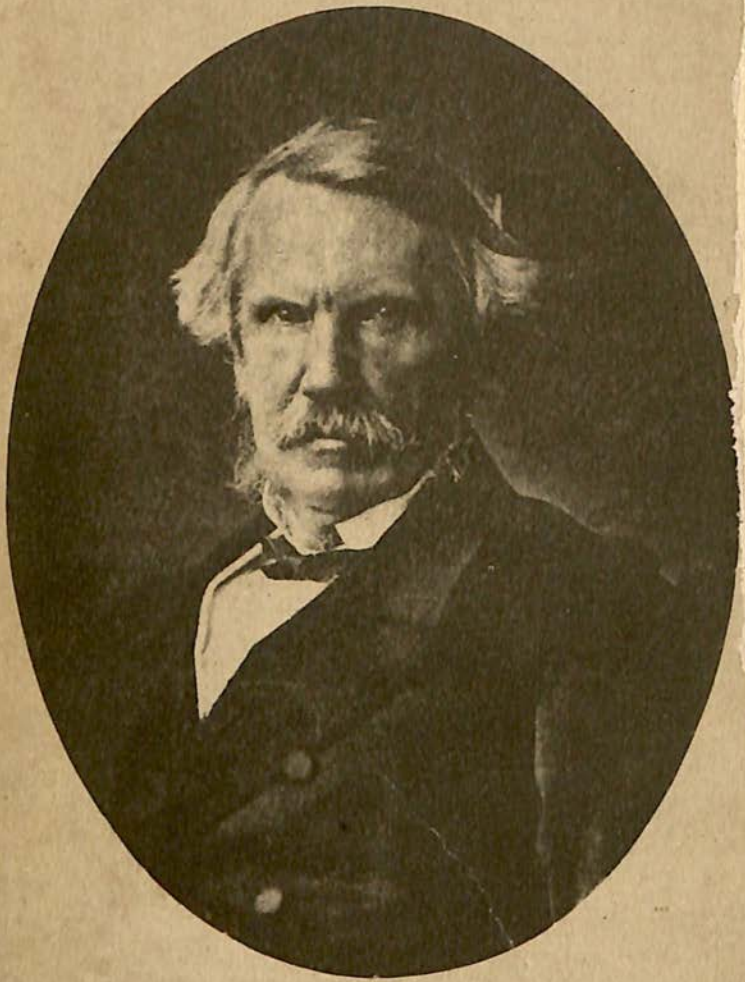

LORD LAWRENCE

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY LOMBARDI

LORD LAWRENCE:

A Sketch of his Public Career.

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BY

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PREFACE.

THE following pages are the fruit of a suggestion thrown out by one of the speakers at the Mansion House meeting held in February last, on behalf of a national memorial to the late Lord Lawrence; a meeting memorable for Lord Derby's ungrudging praise of one whose life "offers absolutely no one topic of detraction to an enemy." On this occasion Lord George Hamilton suggested that some account of Lord Lawrence's great public services should be written and circulated in "as cheap a form as possible," in order that a clearer knowledge of his claims to public reverence might serve to stimulate and swell the flow of subscriptions to the Lawrence Memorial Fund.

On that hint I set to work, as one who had steadily watched the career of the dead statesman from the time of Lord Dalhousie to the end of his own life. Of his pre-eminent services during the first twenty years of that period I had already given some account elsewhere. From these and other materials to which frequent reference is made in this little volume, I have compiled a careful and I hope a readable sketch of one who—

> "cared not to be great,
> But as he saved or served the State."

If it reads too like a mere panegyric, that is not my fault. There are spots in the sun, but who can see them with the naked eye? A condensed memoir of such a man leaves no room for microscopic fault-finding. "Malice itself"—said Lord Derby—"never fastened on his career the imputation of one discreditable incident or unworthy act." Of Lord Lawrence may truly be affirmed what the poet wrote as truly of the Duke of Wellington—

> "Whatever record leaps to light,
> He never will be shamed."

If one or two passages in his career may still be open to some controversy, the following pages, in which his own words and actions have been left for the most part to speak for themselves, will at least show how strong a claim he has bequeathed to the gratitude of a generous nation.

In dealing with his public services, it was impossible to avoid laying stress on that part of his general policy which has been the most widely and persistently assailed; I mean his policy towards Afghánistán, the policy which he upheld to the very last in spite of the clamours of a powerful party bent upon reversing it at any cost. His steadiness in upholding that policy through good and evil report was a cardinal merit in a well-spent and noble life. It brings out into bold relief the wise, clear-headed statesman, the "*justum et tenacem propositi virum,*" who will neither recant nor keep silence to please the multitude or the men in power. And, as men's passions calm down under the teaching of events, it will be found to shed new lustre on the memory of one "who never sold the truth to serve the

hour," and who fought a losing cause as fearlessly as he had once fought for the safety of our Indian Empire.

In this brief record of simple greatness I have said little about Lord Lawrence's private worth. The task of writing a full biography, of showing to the world how good as well as great was the man whom we have lately lost, has already been undertaken by a competent pen. Meanwhile the present sketch, if it be worth anything, should help forward rather than hinder the end which all well-wishers to the subject of that biography must have at heart.

L. J. T.

Blackheath,
April 12th, 1880.

PS.—To Mr. W. S. Seton-Karr, who was Lord Lawrence's Foreign Secretary during the last year of his Indian rule, and his intimate friend during the last nine years of his life, my thanks are due for his kindness in helping me to revise the proof-sheets.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
Lawrence's birth and parentage	1
Character of his father and mother	2
His school-days	3
Offer of a writership	4
Goes out to India	5
Begins work at Delhi	6
His transfer to Pánipat	6
Takes charge of Gurgaon	7
Falls ill at Etawah	8
At home on furlough	9
Returns to India	9
Becomes Magistrate and Collector of Delhi	10
Commissioner of Jalandhar	11
Acts for his brother at Lahor	12
Returns to Jalandhar	14
Rising in the Panjáb	14
Risings in Jalandhar	15
Defeat of Rám Singh	16
Fresh risings in November	17

PAGE

Lawrence at Dinanagar 18
Final rout of the insurgents 19
Results of Lawrence's prompt action . . . 20

CHAPTER II.

Conquest of the Panjáb 22
Dalhousie's interviews with Lawrence . . . 23
Lawrence's place in the Panjáb Board . . . 24
Duties of the new Board 25
The administrative programme 26
Its successful accomplishment 28
Lawrence's share in the work done 29
Points of difference between the brothers . . 30
Lawrence made Chief Commissioner . . . 32
Progress in the Panjáb 33
Lawrence's assistants 34
Repression of infanticide 35
Negotiations with Dost Mohammad 37
Their satisfactory issue 38

CHAPTER III.

First warnings of the sepoy revolt 39
Progress of mutiny 40
Lawrence at Ráwal Pindi 41
Outlook in the Panjáb 42
Preparations at Pesháwar 43
Disarming of sepoys at Lahor 45
Protection of Philór and Govindgarh . . . 46
Disarming of troops at Pesháwar 46
Its good effects 47

PAGE

Loyalty of Sikh chiefs 48
Rajah of Patiála 49
The Jhind and Nabha Rajahs 50
The Rajah of Kapurthalla 50
Lawrence's commanding influence 51
Kashmir and Afghanistan 52
Lawrence's energetic proceedings 53

CHAPTER IV.

Importance of retaking Delhi 55
First despatch of Sikh levies thither . . . 56
"On to Delhi" 57
Victory of Badli Serai 58
Reinforcements from the Panjáb 59
Nicholson commands the movable column . . 60
Hodson at Delhi 62
Mutiny at Rawal Pindi 63
Lawrence's coolness 63
Risings at Jhilam and Sialkot 64
The Panjáb in July and August 65
Proposed surrender of Pesháwar 66
Lawrence at Lahor 67
Account of his daily work 68
Nicholson's arrival at Delhi 68
His victory at Najafgarh 69
State of things in September 70
Rising in Gogaira 71
Prompt despatch of succours thither . . . 71
True beginning of the siege of Delhi . . . 72
Storming of Delhi and death of Nicholson . . 73
England's debt to Lawrence 74

CHAPTER V.

	PAGE
Quiet reigns in the Panjáb	76
The Delhi district added to the Panjáb	77
Lawrence hastens to Delhi	77
Aspect of the city by the end of 1857	78
Re-establishment of civil order	79
Trial and sentence of the King	79
Lawrence's cool statesmanship	80
His retirement from India	80
Becomes Member of the Council of India	81
Lord Stanley's impression of him	82
His return to India as Viceroy	83
The Bhotan War	84
Its conclusion	85
The Viceroy at Lahor	85
The land-tenures in Oudh and the Panjáb	86
Measures for securing tenant-rights	87
Lawrence's strong sense of justice	88
Land Bill for the new provinces	88
The Oudh Talukdars' Relief Bill	89
The Viceroy and his Council	89
Progress of irrigation works	90
The Orissa Famine	91
Development of railways and telegraphs	92
Appointment of a Cotton Commissioner	93
Encouragement of trade	93
Fiscal and financial measures	94
Sanitary and municipal reforms	94
Progress of popular education	95

CHAPTER VI.

	PAGE
Improvement of soldiers' barracks	96
A new Sailors' Home in Calcutta	97
Repression of European vagrancy	98
Legislative and administrative reforms	99
Decentralised finance	100
Precautions against internal foes	100
Drought in the Upper Provinces	101
The Viceroy's dealings with native princes	102
The campaign in the Black mountain	103
The Abyssinian campaign	104
The Viceroy's Afghan policy	105
His final support of Sher Ali	107
Its outcome in the Ambála Darbár	108
His objections to the forward policy	111
The Minute of January 1869	112
Lawrence's proposed understanding with Russia	114
Reform of the letter postage	115

CHAPTER VII.

Last days in Calcutta	116
Farewell dinner to the Viceroy	117
His parting speech thereat	118
His reception of Lord Mayo	119
His departure from India	120
He becomes Baron Lawrence	120
His first appearance in the House of Lords	121
Becomes Chairman of the London School Board	121
Agreement of Russia with England	122
Lord Lawrence's reply to Sir B. Frere	123
The new policy of Lord Lytton	124

PAGE

The conference at Pesháwar 125
Lord Salisbury's misleading statements . . . 126
The quarrel with Sher Ali 127
Lord Lawrence's public protests 128
His objections to an Afghan war 129
He becomes Chairman of the Afghan Committee . 130
Progress of the war 130
Lord Lawrence's last speech 131
His death and funeral 131
Reflections on his character 132

LORD LAWRENCE:

A Sketch.

CHAPTER I.

JOHN LAIRD MAIR LAWRENCE, born at Richmond in Yorkshire on the 4th of March 1811, was the eighth of twelve children whom Letitia Knox bore to her husband, Alexander Lawrence, a veteran who had seen much fighting and borne many hard blows in Indian and other campaigns in the East. Alexander's father was a mill-owner of Coleraine in County Derry; and his wife Letitia, the daughter of a clergyman in Donegal, traced back her descent to the great Scotch reformer, John Knox. Thus from one parent, if not, indeed, from both, John Lawrence derived that mixture of Scotch and Irish blood, which has stamped a character of its own upon the Protestants of Northern Ireland.

Yet more fortunate were the famous Lawrence brothers, George, Henry, and John, in some other respects. Their father, the fiery war-worn Colonel, seems to have been the soul of chivalry, a gentleman who dared do all that might become a God-fearing Christian; while his wife might fairly have sat for the poet's picture of

> "A perfect woman, nobly plann'd,
> To warn, to comfort, and command."

Both of them, as one of their sons said in after years, "possessed much character." If most of the sons' metal was derived from the father, their mother it was who "kept the family together" and brought them up on very slender means. "She kept the purse, and managed all domestic matters."* The mother of twelve children, ten of whom survived their youth, and the wife of a husband very far from thrifty, must have needed no small powers of management to bring her family up, as Letitia Lawrence did, on an income which never seems to have exceeded five hundred a year.

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* "Life of Sir Henry Lawrence," vol. i. p. 10.

What of schooling her boys could get, was honestly given to them. In due time, thanks to their mother's kind friend, Mr. Hudlestone, and another East India Director, three of them in turn, including Henry, were shipped off to India as cadets in the East India Company's service.

Soon after Henry's departure, John, who was five years younger, went to his first school at Londonderry. Two years later, when the family were at Clifton, he was removed to another school at Bath, where he stayed about two years. Long afterwards he told his friend Sir Herbert Edwardes how backward he had been as a schoolboy, not from dulness, but from the want of sufficient training. Neither Henry nor himself, he said, was dull. "We were both bad in languages and always continued so; and were not good in anything which required a technical memory; but we were good in anything which required thought and judgment. We were good, for instance, in history."*

But the time was coming when John, like

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* Edwardes's "Life of Sir H. Lawrence," vol. i. p. 29.

Henry, would be free to teach himself. In 1827, when John was a sturdy well-grown youth of sixteen, the never-failing kindness of Mr. Hudlestone procured him a writership in the Company's civil service. But John's heart was set upon being a soldier, and if fate had so ordered it, an excellent soldier he would have made. His father's arguments and pleadings on the other side, aided even by his mother's counsels, would have spent themselves in vain, had they not been seconded by his brother Henry, whose timely reappearance at home on sick leave, after the hard trials of a Burmese campaign, proved the turning-point of John's career. The contrast which Henry drew between the pay and prospects of the two services weighed down the scale in favour of that course which would best enable so good a son to help his parents over their money difficulties. John Lawrence elected to go to Haileybury, and India reaped the full benefit of his choice.

During the two years he had to spend at the great training-college for Indian civil servants, he carried off prizes for history, law, political economy, and Bengáli, besides passing out with fair credit as third on the list of

"writers" appointed to Bengal.* On the 2nd of September Henry and John Lawrence set out together for Calcutta on a voyage which lasted over five months. In spite of sea-sickness John found ample time to pursue with his elder brother the special studies required for his new career. To Henry's influence and encouragement John always owned himself largely indebted for the success of his earlier efforts to teach himself. It was less, indeed, from choice than necessity that he went out to India. He once told the present Lord Derby that he would never have gone thither, if he had only had enough to live upon, however poorly, at home. And another witness † speaks of his first experiences of an Indian climate as being so distasteful, that "an offer of £100 per annum would probably have taken him home again."

His aspirations, indeed, were always modest enough. But the force of circumstances could not be resisted, and his own good sense led him to work on unflinchingly at the task imposed upon him against his will. If, like

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* Colonel Malleson's "Recreations of an Indian Official," p. 4.

† *Ibid.*, p. 5.

Metcalfe, he often sighed for home, he resolved at any rate to do his duty in the land of his exile. By the end of 1830 he had passed the needful examinations, and was soon hurrying up the country in his palankeen, to learn the duties of a joint magistrate and assistant collector at Delhi under its able Resident Sir Charles Metcalfe.

The next nine years brought out in the young hard-working revenue officer most of the great qualities which he was afterwards to illustrate so conspicuously on far wider fields. After four years of steady, fruitful work in the Delhi district, the experience he had gained and the proofs he had given of zeal, honesty, discretion, and cool self-reliance, marked him out for the civil charge of the Pánipat district, an area of 1,800 square miles peopled by nearly half a million souls. In the course of two years Lawrence, almost single-handed, brought the whole of a large, turbulent, unsettled country into almost perfect order. By mixing freely among the people, hearing their complaints, rendering strict justice between man and man, hunting down the law-breakers, settling disputes about land between neighbouring villages, and carefully readjusting the

revenue assessments, he won the confidence and respect of all classes under his rule, from the peaceful citizens and toil-worn husbandmen to the wild Gújar and Ránghar tribes of the Jamna valley.*

When the time came to hand over the district of which he had but temporary charge to its destined officer, Lawrence returned to Delhi in 1837. A few months later he was hard at work revising the revenue settlements in Gurgaon. A sore drought was even then wasting the Land of the Two Rivers, the Doáb or fertile plains watered by the Ganges and the Jamna. Multitudes of starving wretches filled the country between Agra and Delhi, and distress begotten of scarcity gave a new impulse to many forms of crime. Tribes of professional thieves and robbers infested Lawrence's district; but without help from a single soldier, Lawrence kept such order among his people, that no serious outbreak happened, nor did cases of crime much exceed the average of ordinary years.

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* Malleson's "Recreations"; Raikes's "Notes on the N. W. Provinces."

In the following year he was entrusted with the task of revising the land-settlements in Etawah, a district lying between Agra and Cawnpore. Working in concert with the officers of the new revenue survey devised by Robert Bird, he superintended the measurement of every field, made careful search into the different forms of land-tenure, examined patiently every claim for a lowered assessment or for temporary remission of the land-tax on account of the late drought. But the work thus zealously pursued for several months, in a district noted for its fierce summer heats and the heaviness of its monsoon rains, was cut short in September 1839 by an attack of jungle fever which brought its victim very near to an untimely grave. After hanging for some weeks between life and death, he took his way by boat down to Calcutta. There the fever again attacked him, and at length on the 28th of February 1840 he sailed for England on a furlough of three years.

We may imagine how tenderly his return was greeted by his mother and sisters—the brave old father had died a few years before—and how carefully they nursed the son and brother whose yearly remittances from India

had added so much to their worldly comforts.* A part of his furlough he spent in travelling, but the effects of his fever still dogged his steps. For a time he became so ill that it seemed very doubtful whether his health would ever stand a return to India. Return, however, he did, with his bodily strength fairly recruited, before the end of 1842, in company with the lady whom he had not long married, and in whom he was to find a helpmate as true and tender as Honoria Marshall proved to his brother Henry.†

Before they landed at Bombay, our arms had triumphed over the great Afghan rising which, beginning with the murder of Burnes at Kabul, was crowned by the slaughter of 4,000 troops and twice as many camp-followers amidst the snows of Khurd-Kabul and Jagdalak. Among the few captives whom Pollock rescued from an Afghan prison was Captain George Lawrence, an officer even then of some mark; while Henry Lawrence had been doing noteworthy service as political officer with the Avenging Army that retrieved, so far as it

* John and his three elder brothers used to make up a purse between them for the benefit of their dear ones at home.

† Her maiden name was Hamilton.

could, the disasters and the shame of the previous winter.

During the next two years, memorable for the conquest of Sind and the campaign in Gwáliár, John Lawrence seems to have been shifted about from one temporary post to another. It was not till the end of 1844 that he found himself installed as Magistrate and Collector of his old district, Delhi. He was working away there with his wonted energy and singleness of purpose, when the lowering aspect of things on the Sikh frontier brought the Governor-General, Sir Henry Hardinge, to the old Moghal capital, on his way towards the Satlaj. A month later, in December 1845, the Sikh army crossed the Satlaj, and the war began. In his rides and talks with Lawrence about Delhi, Sir Henry had gleaned much useful knowledge from the quiet companion whose sterling worth the brave old soldier speedily discovered, beneath a somewhat rugged manner and an independent frankness of speech. As soon as the war broke out, Lawrence set himself with unsparing zeal to the task of collecting carriage and supplies for Gough's army in the field. To his judgment, energy, and strong personal in-

fluence with all classes of the people, was mainly owing the despatch of those sorely-needed succours and supplies, which enabled Gough and Hardinge to win the decisive victory of Sobraon.

From that moment John Lawrence found himself borne along on the full tide of assured success. When the war was over, Sir H. Hardinge, who remembered how promptly his subaltern at Delhi had answered his urgent call for aid at a great crisis, invited him to take administrative charge of the newly-ceded Sikh province of Jalandhar, lying between the Satlaj and the hills beyond the Biyás. Lawrence hastened up to Amritsar, where Lord Hardinge —for such he had become—met him on the 1st of March 1846. After due consultation with his Chief, he set forth upon the difficult task of governing a country peopled by warlike Sikhs and highlanders unused to civilised rule.

That task, however, his past experience as a settlement officer rendered easier to a man of Lawrence's inborn capacity for ruling men. With the aid of a few English and native subordinates, the Commissioner of Jalandhar at once began to set his new province in comparative order. Land-tenures were carefully in-

vestigated; the lands themselves were reassessed at rates which seemed moderate to the countrymen and erewhile subjects of Ranjit Singh; payment of the land-revenue was everywhere required in money, and not in kind; and all existing rights of owners or cultivators were scrupulously observed. An efficient police was organised at a moderate cost. Trade was relieved of many unfair restrictions; roads, bridges, and other public works were set on foot; and justice was administered cheaply and promptly to all who sought it. Crime was punished under a rough ready-made code of penal rules, easily worked and easy to understand. Ere long the name of "Jan Larans Sahib" became a household word among the people whom he had been so opportunely sent to govern.

In the midst of his many labours for their good, he was called away twice in as many years to help or act for his brother Colonel Henry Lawrence, our resident at Lahor, where a strong British garrison enforced order in the name of the great Ranjit's latest successor, the child-sovereign Dhulip Singh. John's sound judgment and ripe experience enabled Henry to carry through the Sikh Council of Regency some

wise and important measures of fiscal reform. When the Sikh Rajah, Lal Singh, was brought to open trial in December 1846, for plotting against the new Sikh ruler of Kashmír, John sat with his brother Henry upon the Court which found that Rajah guilty of the offences laid to his charge. "My chief help"—wrote Henry afterwards to the historian Sir John Kaye, with reference to the difficulties of his post at this period—"was in my brother John, without whom I should have had difficulty in carrying on." *

Yet more important was the help which John gave him during the latter half of 1847, when the prolonged strain upon his powers of mind and body drove Henry at last to seek rest and refreshment in his native land. Leaving his brother to continue the great work which had thus far prospered signally under his own hand, Henry made his way in the cold season down to Calcutta, and thence voyaged homewards in company with his steady friend and patron, Lord Hardinge.

The Acting Resident held his post to the end of February 1848. But ambition was

* Kaye's "Lives of Indian Officers," vol. ii. p. 238.

never his *forte*, and he gladly made over the reins of government to Henry's destined substitute, Sir Frederick Currie. Returning to Jalandhar, he resumed his old labours without a sigh. But he little dreamed of the new call which would soon be made upon his energies and his resources. The hot season of 1848 had not long set in when a new storm of war gathered over the Panjab. The murder of two British officers at Multán, followed by the sudden rebellion of its Governor, Mulráj, startled all India towards the end of April, and filled thoughtful minds with dark misgivings of what might happen in the Land of the Five Rivers.

Among those who saw the need for prompt action at all hazards with the means that came first to hand, was John Lawrence himself, whose soldierly instincts were in warm sympathy with the bold movements of the eager and resourceful Herbert Edwardes. But the Indian Government, under its new chief, Lord Dalhousie, for one grave reason and another preferred delay; and the local outbreak grew and grew, as such things will under such encouragement, into the uprising of an armed nation. One Sikh noble after another joined the revolt,

and by the time that Lord Gough himself took the field in October, thousands of Ranjit Singh's warriors and of younger men just drilled under English officers were ready once more to try conclusions with the victors of Firozshahr and Sobraon. Dost Mohammad too, still craving after his old province of Peshâwar, was sending his Afghans down through the Khaibar to take part in the coming fray.

The flames of insurrection spread even to Jalandhar, where Sikh priests and leaders diligently strove to rouse the people against their new masters. But the plotters reckoned without John Lawrence. As early, indeed, as the month of May one reverend "Guru," Maharâj Singh, who had gathered round him many hundreds of ill-armed but zealous followers, threatened a raid into Jalandhar from the neighbouring hill-fort of Pathânkot. But the fords of the Biyâs were closely watched by Lawrence's police with the aid of Wheeler's Sepoys, and the insurgent bands were presently scattered by the troops of a friendly Chief.

In September a yet more formidable movement was met and baffled by the Commissioner's forecasting promptitude. Under the leadership of one Râm Sing, son of the Rájpút

Wazír of Núrpur, armed bodies of Sikhs and highlanders mustered strongly in the hill-country around Núrpur and Pathánkot. At Lawrence's urgent request troops were at once marched towards the seat of danger. One body of insurgents, encamped outside the fort of Shahpur, was attacked and routed by Major Fisher's column, and the fort itself soon fell into the victors' hands. Reinforced by fresh levies, Rám Singh once more defied the British power from the heights of Bánsha, which overlooked the town of Núrpur. Lawrence, who had reached that place with a few local levies, would have attacked the enemy at once, had the troops near him been under his sole command. But some days had to elapse before an answer to his message came from Brigadier Wheeler; days spent by himself in reconnoitring the enemy's position, and taking, through Fisher, all due precautions against their escape.

At last, on the 19th of September, the attack was made on Fisher's little force, in concert with a local regiment of Sikhs under Major Hodgson and a few hundred Rájpúts lent by some friendly hill chiefs. After a short but sharp fight the shattered enemy were

driven in wild flight towards Kashmir; numbers falling as they fled, while many were afterwards hunted down in the jungle by their keen pursuers, the men of Ferris's hill corps. Rám Sing himself got clear away, but the bulk of his followers were either slain or taken prisoners; for Lawrence, however prompt and stern to punish, was always merciful in the hour of victory.*

But the most brilliant of Lawrence's military feats has yet to be recorded. Quiet reigned for a time in Jalandhar; but the snake had been scotched, not killed. Rám Singh was still alive, and affairs in the Panjab still gave encouragement to many plotters against our rule. On the 19th of November a body of Sikhs from the Bári Doáb, with six guns, were led by Ram Singh against Pathánkot, garrisoned by fifty of Lawrence's Sikhs and a few police. At that time Brigadier Wheeler was still employed in capturing insurgent strongholds and clearing the country between the Rávi and the

* Malleson's "Recreations"; Arnold's "Administration of Lord Dalhousie"; Trotter's "British Empire in India." Lawrence's able assistant, Mr. Barnes, was his right-hand man on this occasion.

Chináb. But the Commissioner of Jalandhar proved equal to the need. Grasping his nettle with a strong sure hand, he at once got together a few hundred of his own Sikhs and hillmen, and hastened by forced marches to meet the foe. Forced back from Pathánkot by the swift advance of Major Simpson's regulars, Rám Singh retreated towards Dinanagar, within the frontier of the Sikh Kingdom. Lawrence, however, would not be thus baulked of his prey. With 400 horse and foot and two guns, he hurried across the Biyás in hot pursuit, while Simpson and Ferris led their troops round upon the enemy's rear. On the morning of the 26th of November his little force came up with the insurgents, who, after a brief struggle, turned and fled. Had Ferris's men reached their ground in good time, very few of the runaways would have escaped.

Meanwhile new enemies called Lawrence away from his brief rest at Dinanagar. On the 24th the Jeswan Rajah and the Bídí, or high priest of the Sikhs, at Unah, had risen in revolt against the "Sahibs." About the same time the Mulmóri Rajah had taken the same course in the upper range of hills stretching from Kashmir down to the Satlaj. Leaving his

like-minded assistant Mr. Barnes to deal with the Mulmori rebels, Lawrence marched with all speed against the Bídí and his friends. On his way across Jalandhar, he turned aside to attack another Rajah who had just seized the fort of Dangoh. At the first sounds of his advance the Rajah fled. The timely capture of his son enabled Lawrence to procure the father's surrender on terms too merciful to be rejected. Happily for Lawrence's purpose, the people of the country held aloof for the most part from these risings, while the head men of the villages readily placed their services at his command.

On the 2nd of December the rebel chiefs at Unah and Akrot saw their forces scattered with heavy slaughter, and their strongholds taken and dismantled by Hodgson's Sikhs and a wing of the 29th Sepoys. The Jeswan Rajah yielded himself a prisoner, and the Bidi with a few followers fled into the recesses of the hills. Barnes also with the aid of Ferris's hill-rangers had by this time routed the Mulmóri rebels and become master of the Rajah's palace. By the 3rd of December Lawrence's little campaign was fairly over. "Within thirteen days" —as he himself wrote to Sir F. Currie—

"peace and order have been restored throughout the territory by the capture or dispersion of the insurgents. This result has been effected with little less of life, and hardly any expense to Government. Had we not thus promptly acted, I am convinced that the rebellion would have assumed a formidable aspect, and have cost blood and treasure to suppress. Many who had every intention of joining against us were paralysed by our movements, and the good intentions of the well-disposed were confirmed."

Fortunate, indeed, it was for England that a ruler of this stamp had been placed in charge of a province lately won from Sikh dominion and largely peopled by men of Sikh blood, or by races having little in common with their new masters. "The General"—he modestly writes—"was absent from the territory, and I and my assistant were necessarily obliged to act on our own responsibility to a considerable extent." Had John Lawrence been less bold, less ready to "take occasion by the hand," more afraid of acting on his own responsibility; had his military insight been less unerring, or his mastery over his human instruments less sure and wide-reaching, the

danger which he seemed to quell so easily would else have grown to very large proportions indeed. How large I will not conjecture, because anything like overpraise or exaggeration would only miss the mark aimed at in this brief record of a great career. But every reader of Indian history must know how often a well-timed boldness turns out to be the highest prudence, and how much of our hold on India has depended on the exercise of those great qualities which Lawrence was to display yet more conspicuously in the dark days of 1857. Enough, perhaps, to say that, but for his wise promptitude and skilful daring, the progress of our arms in the Panjáb would have been sorely hindered by a growing rebellion in Jalandhar.

CHAPTER II.

From this time forth quiet reigned in the Jalandhar Doáb. On the 22nd of February 1849, Lord Gough's crowning victory at Gujarát atoned for the doubtful and disastrous fight of Chilianwalla in the previous January. On the 29th of March, while Gilbert's weary troops were resting at Pesháwar after their long chase of the flying Afghans up to the Khaibar pass, Sir Henry Lawrence, who had just returned to his old post at Lahor, announced in full Darbár to the Sikh leaders and their boy-sovereign, that the dynasty of Ranjit Singh had ceased to rule the country which the issues of "a fierce and bloody war," provoked by the Sikhs themselves, had now added to the dominions of the East India Company.

As soon as the Darbár was over, the guns of the garrison thundered a salute to the English colours as they floated out from the ramparts of the citadel.

Before issuing the decree thus formally registered, Lord Dalhousie had taken counsel with the Commissioner of Jalandhar. The result of their interviews satisfied the Governor-General that the step he contemplated ought to be taken with the least possible delay, while the sense of utter defeat was still fresh in the minds of the "Khalsa," and the season favoured any movements that might be needed for securing our new conquest.* Confirmed by Lawrence in his belief that the Panjáb, rightly governed, would not only pay its own expenses, but prove a strong bulwark to our Indian Empire, Dalhousie at once proceeded to carry out a measure the policy of which was recognised even by Lord Hardinge, while its results have hitherto furnished more cause for thankfulness than for regret.

For his recent services in Jalandhar, Lawrence had received the special thanks of the

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* "Life of Sir H. Lawrence," vol. ii. pp. 129–31.

Indian Government. He had already, in the eloquent words of Kaye, "achieved a high reputation as an administrator; as one of those hardworking, energetic, conscientious servants of the State, who live ever with the harness on their back, to whom labour is at once a duty and a delight, who do everything in a large unstinting way, the Ironsides of the Public Service." * To one so worthy of all honour Lord Dalhousie now paid the highest compliment which it rested with him to bestow. He had resolved to govern his new conquest through a Board consisting of Sir H. Lawrence and two colleagues of approved worth. The Resident of Lahor stood first by right of age, experience, and past distinctions. The second seat in the Board was reserved for Mr. John Lawrence. With characteristic reluctance the Commissioner of Jalandhar agreed to exchange the post which for three years past he had filled so ably for the new and difficult task which awaited him at Lahor. Let us be thankful that his strong sense of duty prevailed over his want of vulgar ambition.

* Kaye's "Sepoy War," vol. i. p. 51.

As President of the new board Sir Henry Lawrence, whose statesmanship had been proved both at Káthmandú and Lahor, and whose personal influence had already endeared him to the ruling and fighting classes in the Panjáb, undertook the special management of all political affairs. To his brother John was entrusted the wide department of revenue and finance. The third member of this triumvirate, Mr. Mansel, who had made his mark as a financier, and "was known to possess a thoughtful and inventive mind,"* took special charge of the police and the administration of justice. Under these men were gathered a brilliant staff of officers, civil and military, each of whose names has shed its own lustre on the pages of Indian history. Never was Dalhousie's genius for rule displayed so happily as in his choice of agents for the public service in the Panjáb. Some of them, like Nicholson, Abbott, Edwardes, Mackeson, George Lawrence, had already earned their laurels under the Government of Dhulip Singh. For administrative purposes the new

* Arnold's "Administration of Lord Dalhousie," vol. i. p. 230.

province was marked out into seven divisions, each ruled by a Commissioner through a small but adequate staff of assistants, English and Native. The Commissioners and their district officers discharged duties of many different kinds. They were, says Kaye, "judges, revenue-collectors, thief-catchers, diplomatists, conservancy officers, and sometimes recruiting sergeants, and chaplains, all in one." No wonder that men, so trained under such leaders as the two Lawrences, became "equal to any fortune, and in no conjuncture, however critical, were ever likely to fail." *

The work cut out for the Board demanded all their best energies. If there was little to undo, there was plenty to do in a country nearly as large as France, peopled by millions of Játs and Mohammadans, mostly traders or husbandmen, by about two million Sikhs, all soldiers of the ruling class, and by many hundred thousand hillmen of different creeds and races. Ranjit Singh's rude system of justice had to be improved and worked in fair accordance with English ideas and usages.

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* Kaye's "Sepoy War," vol. i. p. 55.

His fiscal system, at once complicated and oppressive, had to be thoroughly remodelled. A new and efficient police had to be formed. The old Khálsa soldiery had to be won over either by offers of service in the British ranks, or by pensions, grants of land, and other inducements to keep the peace. The great Sikh barons and landowners, who had least cause to welcome the change of masters, had to be treated as tenderly as justice to all classes, a wise economy, and a due regard for the common weal would allow. The land-revenue needed readjusting on the principles which John Lawrence had applied so successfully beyond the Biyás. Our relations with a number of semi-independent chiefs and princes was a problem demanding much careful thought. The hill tribes within our new border needed ruling with a firm but light hand. And last, but not least important, came the question of guarding a long line of frontier from the raids of lawless neighbours in the Sulaiman Hills.

Such, in brief, was the programme of work devolving on the Board. During the next three years that programme was steadily carried out, under the supervision of Dal-

housie himself, who traversed the Panjáb from end to end, to see with his own eyes what his lieutenants had been doing. Great had been the labour, but great already were its fruits. Peace and order reigned everywhere. Of the old Sikh warriors many had turned their swords into plough-shares, while the rest had taken service in the ranks of the new police, of the regular Sepoy regiments, or of the picked force which guarded the frontier. Entrusted with magisterial and other powers, the great landholders saw their interest in supporting the new rule. The Sikh nobles, if they bewailed the loss of some old feudal privileges, felt grateful at least to Sir H. Lawrence for his efforts to save them from yet worse mishaps. A simple and humane code of justice dealt swift punishment on proved offenders and enabled all classes to obtain cheap and easy redress. Agriculture throve under a revenue system which left the husbandman a fair margin of profit on his crops. Trade was fostered by the making of roads, the removal of transit-duties, and the measures taken to suppress the crimes of Thuggee and gang-robbery. In every district schools were opened, to which the poorest

villagers could send their children on payment of a trifling fee.

In nearly all the good things thus effected, the hand of John Lawrence was clearly traceable. Besides his own special province, the revenue, he had to do much in fact of his brother's work. Henry had no taste for details, and his weakened health was not improved by the political issues of the Panjáb Campaign. In a letter to Mr. Montgomery who had presently taken Mr. Mansel's place at the Board, John Lawrence described his brother as "ill apparently in mind and body" on his return to India, and as "sorely chafed by the annexation." Hence he "did comparatively little work. All details were thrown upon me; everybody was referred to me. Whoever did not understand what was to be done, was referred to me for explanation. Establishments, pensions, jagheers, all were thrown upon my shoulders." *

Sir Henry's frequent trips into the country, however good for his health and useful for certain political ends, involved fresh additions

* "Life of Sir H. Lawrence," vol. ii. p. 186.

to the burden borne by his brother John. The latter, however, was not the man to flinch from any amount of hard office work, nor did he grumble at the mere transfer of another's burdens to his own broad shoulders. But it troubled him to find how greatly he and his brother differed on many points of State policy. In 1852 the gulf between them grew daily wider. He had approved of the annexation at which Sir Henry still chafed. The support which his younger brother received from Lord Dalhousie added fuel to the flame of Sir Henry's discontent. Sir Henry's sympathies were all on the side of the old aristocracy who, under the old rule, had held their lands free of all fiscal burdens. John on the other hand felt no less strongly the unfairness of exemptions which favoured the wealthy, idle, and high-placed few at the expense of the poor and toiling many. His first duty, he thought, was to make all classes contribute their due share to the cost of government; and he cared, perhaps, too little for the claims of old usage in comparison with the demands of justice and the need of balancing the public income with the expenditure. Sir Henry for his part looked upon a fair balance-sheet as a thing

of no importance compared with the claims of a body of fief-holders whose good-will he deemed essential to the stability of the new rule.

In the letter from which I have already quoted, written in answer to Sir Henry's complaints of John's opposition to his own views and counsels the latter declared, with regard to the old Sikh pensioners and fiefholders, that he gave way to Henry as much as he could, and often against his own strong convictions; but in vain. "He thinks we treat these classes harshly. I think we have been very kind to them. I cannot see the political value of such allies as Tej Singh, Deena Nath, and others; but it seems to me that we have been even munificent to them." He had no fear of their acting against us with so little inducement to do so, and "if they did, they would do us no harm."

This was the true grievance which made Sir Henry so sore against the brother who loved him and whom he loved. It was not long before Lord Dalhousie, seeing that these "differences of opinion were becoming more frequent and more acrid," and that public business was hindered by the very desire of the two brothers to "avoid cause for engaging in them,"

resolved to carry out his own prearranged scheme of governing the Panjáb by a single Chief Commissioner. Before the end of 1852, both brothers had separately offered to resign their posts. The Governor-General seized his opportunity, and in February 1853 the brother of his own preferring was gazetted Chief Commissioner of the Panjáb. With a sad heart, yet not without a certain sense of relief from past annoyances, Sir Henry parted from his old friends and work-fellows, to undertake the political control of our Native Fendatories in Rájputána.

During the next four years John Lawrence amply justified the preference shown him by his clear-seeing master. Building on the foundations he had helped to lay, the Chief Commissioner proceeded to rear the noble fabric which, unshaken by the storms of the Great Mutiny, still attests the moulding skill and all-subduing energy of its first builders. Under him worked a band of zealous and able subalterns, who, emulous of their Chief's example, never spared themselves in the public service, and vied with each other in carrying out the details of the policy chalked out by the master-spirit at Lahor.

These four years, in the words of Sir Herbert Edwardes, "were spent in perfecting the organisation of the civil government, and in improving the military and political relations of the frontier. They were years of herculean labour, not only to the Chief Commissioner, but to every man under him, high or low. Alone in responsibility, alone in power, John Lawrence bent the full force of his character and energies to the elaboration of a complete machine. Sure never coachman sat firmer on the box, or held reins tighter, drove straighter, or lashed his team more unflinchingly to speed, in this weary world of man-driving and evil roads! . . . We doubt if India has ever seen a province with a civil government so strong, so wise, so moderate, so pure, so good to live under, as that of the Panjáb."

A careful watch was kept along the marches by the picked troops of the Frontier Force. Raids across the border were promptly repelled and sternly punished; and after punishment followed conciliation, employed so skilfully that the same offenders seldom repeated the offence. Many a wild robber clan took to agriculture or trade, filled our ranks with some of their bravest soldiers, or helped in

other ways to guard the peace of a wide frontier. Within the border, men like Nicholson in Bannú and Abbott in Hazára kept a fierce warlike and unruly people in order, mainly by sheer force of a commanding will, an unbending uprightness of purpose, untiring energy, and a shrewd insight into native character. In Lahor itself Lawrence enjoyed the friendship and could always reckon upon the loyal services of his old colleague, Mr. Robert Montgomery, who had special charge of the judicial administration, of Mr. George Edmonstone, his Commissioner of Finance, and by and by of the wise and popular Mr. Donald Macleod, who ultimately filled Mr. Edmonstone's place.

Under such auspices the Panjáb became in truth a model province. Crimes of violence grew rarer and more rare. The native officials in each district proved most useful and trustworthy helpmates to their English chiefs. The trade of the country flourished more and more. Under the impulse of orders from England an improved system of State-aided schools and colleges was set on foot. A system of irrigation canals, devised by the able Engineer who was afterwards to crown

his Indian laurels with the march to Pekin and the capture of Magdala, brought new blessings to the parched but not unfruitful plains of the Bári Doáb. New roads were made in all directions. Surveys were pushed forward for lines of railway which ultimately linked Lahor with Delhi, Calcutta, and Bombay. Hospitals, dispensaries, and other public buildings arose in every district. The drainage and conservancy of great towns was taken in hand. The forests and "grass preserves" were looked after, and trees planted along the waysides. In spite of the removal or reduction of certain taxes, and of new charges for public works, the revenue still showed a balance to the good. The public at large were prosperous and contented. Nature herself seemed to aid our countrymen with a succession of plenteous harvests.

In his efforts to repress crime the Chief Commissioner sometimes had to reckon with the obstructive force of old social usages. One of these lions in his path was the practice of child-murder, against which in Jalandhar he had already waged war. For ages past the habit of putting new-born girls to death had prevailed among certain classes of the people; among the Bídí descendants of Nának,

among the old Rájpút families, the poorer Khattri tribes, even among the Mussulman gentry of the hills. Religion, caste-pride, fashion, poverty, the cruel costliness of Hindu weddings, all account in varying degrees for the prevalence of a custom which doomed yearly to premature death numbers of girl-children, not only in the Panjáb, but in several other parts of India.

It was easy to denounce the practice as a crime, and by public edict to threaten condign punishment on all who thus outraged the laws of Nature. But of what avail, asked the Latin poet, are "laws unaided by moral sentiment?" Having issued his edicts, Lawrence strove to bring the moral sentiment of the people into closer harmony with the laws he administered. His plan of action resembled that which Mr. Raikes had lately applied with much success to the Rájpút child-slayers of Mainpúri. In October 1853, a great gathering of the native gentry met the Chief Commissioner and a few chosen friends on the plain outside Amritsar. After discussing with the English Sahibs the best way of combatting a custom so hateful to English ideas, the native delegates all swore to observe the rules which

might be framed on the bases already accepted by themselves. Similar meetings were held elsewhere with like results. Erelong rules were issued which curtailed the marriage-expenses on a scale according with the means of each parent. Wherever these rules came to be observed, the practice of child-murder fell more and more out of fashion.

From his watch-post at Pesháwar Colonel Edwardes kept an eye on all that happened beyond the border; whether among the hill-tribes of the Sulaimán or in the country ruled by Dost Mohammad. Some friendly overtures made through Edwards to our ancient foe were met by the aged Afghan monarch in a friendly spirit. On the 30th of March 1855 his envoy at Pesháwar concluded with the Chief Commissioner, in the name of Lord Dalhousie, a treaty which pledged him to be the friend of our friends and the enemy of our enemies. A year later, on the outbreak of war with Persia, the bond thus woven began to be knitted yet more closely by fresh negotiations which brought the Amir himself down to Pesháwar in the first days of 1857.

Edwardes himself, the virtual author of this new move, attended Sir John Lawrence, who

had now at last been knighted, at a series of conferences holden with the Amir beneath the shadow of the frowning Khaibar. Before the end of January Dost Mohammad had cheerfully agreed to aid us in the war against Persia in return for the help we promised him in arms and money. On one point only he stood firm. British officers might be sent on a temporary mission to Kandahar, but only a native Indian agent could be allowed to take up his abode at Kábul, where the memories of English wrongdoing were yet green. The presence of an English mission in his own capital would be fatal alike to his interests and to ours. Sir John wisely yielded the point so strongly urged, and the old Amir parted from his English friends with a promise, faithfully observed by him, to keep till death his alliance with the Indian Government.*

* Kaye's "Sepoy War," vol. i.

CHAPTER III.

It was not long before the Amir's loyalty was to be put to a sharp proof. The Persian War was not quite over, when the great Sepoy revolt, which threatened at one time to destroy the whole fabric of our rule in India, rang out its first notes of warning in the mutiny of a Sepoy regiment at Bahrámpur, near Murshidabad. Ever since the beginning of the year a dreadful rumour had been flying about the country, that the cartridges issued with the new rifles had been greased with lard and beef-fat. There was enough of truth in the rumour to convince the Bengal sepoys, credulous as children, prone of late years to distrust their masters, and fed with wild hopes by evil counsellors, that a deep-laid plot was already on foot against the

religion alike of Hindus and Mohammadans throughout India. The Government strove in vain to undo the mischief caused by a stupid blunder. The doubtful cartridges were replaced by others against which no fault could be alleged. But the first impressions were not to be effaced by official disclaimers, however earnest, of any attempt to meddle with the Sepoy's religious scruples. The mutiny of the 26th of February on the Ganges was followed on the 29th of March by the violent outbreak of Mangal Pandi at Barrackpore.

Cantonment fires in several stations of Upper India betrayed the workings of some unwholesome ferment in the Sepoy mind. Plotters were discovered in Calcutta itself. The wildest stories against the Government found ready credence with men prepared to believe the worst. On the 24th of April at Meerut a body of native troopers refused to handle cartridges of the very same pattern as those which they had always handled before. Early in the next month the mutinous spirit flamed up in Oudh, the latest annexation of Lord Dalhousie. A murderous outbreak at Meerut on the 10th of May, crowned by a still worse disaster at Delhi on the day following, opened men's eyes at last

to the gravity of a crisis which few of our countrymen had hitherto foreseen.

Before the insurgents could cut the telegraph-wires, the unwelcome tidings had been flashed from Delhi up to Ambála and Lahor. Happily for us the main lines of telegraph had been completed before Dalhousie left India. Happy also was it for England that Sir John Lawrence and his able helpmates were still guiding the destinies of the Panjáb. Lawrence himself had not long started for the hill-station of Marri, beyond Ráwal Pindi, to recruit his health weakened by so many years of incessant work in a trying climate. His eye-sight too was even then failing him. His doctor had strongly advised him to go home, but Lawrence felt that the time for taking so long a holiday was not yet come. The sad news from Delhi at once aroused him to a lively sense of the danger which he, like most of his countrymen in India, had hitherto under-rated. His fears were speedily confirmed by the mutiny at Firozpur on the 13th of May. From Ráwal Pindi, where he had just arrived on his way to the hills, he sent off telegrams followed by letters to Lord Canning, the Governor-General, and to General Anson, his

Commander-in-Chief. The latter, then at Ambála in the plains below Simla, was earnestly exhorted to march at once with such troops as he could muster upon Delhi. From Lord Canning he urgently requested leave to raise a body of Sikh Irregulars for immediate service, in aid of his European garrison.

Thus far no signs of disorder or disaffection had ruffled the peaceful tenour of his rule. His own inquiries into the temper of the Sepoy regiments in the Panjáb had failed to discover any good grounds for special anxiety. His Sikh and Panjábi soldiers had shown a manifest eagerness to exchange their old smooth-bore muskets for the new Enfield rifles, cartridges and all. From the people at large he knew that he had little cause to fear harm. His own name had become a tower of strength for all who dwelt in peace and comfort under a ruler so strong, so just, so merciful. Even among the old Sikh and Mohammadan nobles he could reckon upon many loyal friends or philosophic believers in the decrees of Fate. His relations with the frontier tribes had been growing yearly more and more promising. His new friendship with Dost Mohammad just sealed by the arrival of Lumsden's mission at

Kandahar, seemed to furnish a fair guarantee for the safety of his own province in time of need. Besides all this, some ten thousand good British soldiers with a due proportion of guns might well be trusted to guard their country's flag against any number of likely assailants.

It was time, however, to be up and doing, to lose not a minute, to spare no pains, in battling with the storm which already raged beyond the Satlaj, and might at any moment burst over the Panjáb. The great frontier city of Peshá-war, peopled largely with men of the border races, was overawed by a powerful garrison of British and Native troops, under the command of Brigadier Sydney Cotton, a good officer and a leader well skilled in frontier warfare. General Reed, who commanded the Pesháwar Division, Colonel Edwardes, the Commissioner of the province, and his new Deputy-Commis-sioner, the fearless, the high-hearted Nicholson, were all present in the same place. These four, with Neville Chamberlain, the brave and trusted Commander of the Panjáb Frontier Force, held a council of war, at which it was agreed to form at once a moveable column of picked troops, ready to march upon any point where

danger might threaten, or rebellion rear its head. It was also decided that certain Sepoy regiments should change places with Sikh and Panjábi troops that might be called in from outlying posts for the defence of strongholds like Attok, and the reinforcement of stations like Jhilam and Pesháwar. To General Reed himself was assigned the chief command of all the troops in the Panjáb; a duty which, by removing him to Ráwal Pindi, was sure to bring him, as Edwardes meant it should, into perfect, if unconscious harmony with the views and purposes of the Chief Commissioner. Once planted there by the side of a ruler so wise and masterful, the new Military Dictator would cease to dictate, and "John Lawrence, with Herbert Edwardes for his Wazír,"* would enjoy the counsels without really accepting the lead of the military chiefs.

From the breezy uplands of Ráwal Pindi Lawrence telegraphed his hearty approval of the measures taken, not without his knowledge, at Pesháwar. He himself would have gone yet further in the way of precaution, to the

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* Kaye's "Sepoy War," vol. ii. p. 460.

extent of disarming the more doubtful regiments in a garrison where the Sepoys outnumbered the British by three to one. At Lahor the disarming process had already been carried out with praiseworthy foresight by his old schoolfellow and trusty lieutenant, Mr. Robert Montgomery, in thorough concert with Brigadier Corbett, the brave old soldier who commanded at Mianmir. On the 13th of May some three thousand Sepoys ripe for mutiny laid down their arms before six hundred white soldiers and twelve guns. A like precaution saved the citadel itself. Had equal promptitude been displayed at Firozpur and Ambála, some bloodshed, havoc, and disorder might have been averted, nor would the magazine at Firozpur have come so near to falling into the hands of insurgent Sepoys. Both these stations were then outside the Panjáb; but Lawrence, quick to see the danger, had strongly urged upon General Anson the policy of disarming the native troops at Ambála and elsewhere.

Within his own province things on the whole were better managed. Short of disarming, all due precautions were taken by Colonel Hartley for the safe-guarding of Jalandhar. From that station the prompt despatch of two hun-

dred men with two guns saved the fort and magazine of Philor on the right bank of the Satlaj, opposite Ludhiána. From Lahor itself on the evening of the 13th a small body of infantry were hurried off in *ekhas* or rude pony-carts to strengthen the garrison of Govindgarh, overlooking the great Sikh city of Amritsar, whose active magistrate, ably seconded by a few assistants and a vigilant police, was doing his best to discourage panic and overawe the disaffected.

Meanwhile the need for disarming the Sepoys at Pesháwar was growing daily more visible. Of the eight native regiments, horse and foot, there quartered, four were known to be disaffected. On the 21st of May it was known that native troops had mutinied both at Naushéra and Mardán. Recruits for the new levies were coming in very slowly, as if the Patháns of the border shrank from fighting for a doomed cause. The time, urged Edwardes, had come for further action, and Brigadier Cotton gave the word to disarm. Before sunrise of the next day each of the four guilty regiments, as it stood in parade order on its own ground, saw itself confronted by a wing of a British regiment and three guns ready loaded.

Cowed by the well-planned surprise, the Sepoys laid down their arms at the bidding of their own officers.

The effect of this "master-stroke," as Lawrence himself called it, was magical. It began to show itself that very morning in the contrast between the few native friends who followed Edwardes to the parade-ground, and the many who "thick as flies" greeted him on his way back. From that moment too levies began to come in. Afridis, Momands, Yusafzais, flocked in from across the border to fight on what seemed to be the winning side. With the help of these new levies Nicholson inflicted stern vengeance on the mutineers flying from Mardán, while those who got away into the hills of Swát and Kashmir fared no better in the long run. Betrayed for money by the men of Swát, warned off their grounds by the fierce warriors of Kághan, hunted down by Edwardes's police and the soldiers of the Kashmir Rajah, nearly all of them fell beneath the weapons of their pursuers, or suffered the death awarded by martial law to proved traitors. In the same manner the Afridi tribesmen showed their zeal for their new employers by giving over to justice some two

hundred runaways from one of the disarmed regiments at Pesháwar.

By this time also Sir John Lawrence knew that he could depend upon the active loyalty of the Sikh Chiefs who ruled on either side of the Sutlaj. One of his first thoughts on the outbreak of the Mutiny had been to test that loyalty by calling on them for such aid as they could render the Paramount Power at such a crisis. And right loyally did they answer the call made upon them through Mr. Barnes and other Political Officers. If for a moment some of them might waver between their duty and their ambition, the decision was speedily made and promptly followed up. The noble Raja of Patiála, the acknowledged head of the Sikhs, at once marched with all his forces towards Ambála, sent all his spare carriage to Kalka for the transport of British troops from the neighbouring hill-stations, and ordered part of his own troops with a few guns to guard the district of Thanésar, lying between Ambála and Karnál. Other of his troops were presently posted along the high-road from Karnál to Philor. "His support at such a crisis"—wrote the Commissioner of the Cis-Satlaj States—"was worth a

brigade of English troops to us, and served more to tranquillise the people than a hundred official disclaimers would have done." Not less timely was the aid this noble ruler rendered us during the next two years. From the Satlaj to Delhi he kept the roads clear for the passage of the troops forwarded by Lawrence to the camp of the besiegers. Carriage, supplies, and money were freely placed at our disposal. Five hundred of his best soldiers did good service at the siege of Delhi; while other of his officers helped to put down rebellion in the surrounding country. In Dholpur, Jhajar, Gwáliár, Oudh, wherever indeed such help was needed, his troops were employed from time to time in restoring order, or preventing revolt.*

South of Patiála lay the little State of Jhínd, whose gallant Rajah not only led his little force to Karnál but marched down with Barnard's column to Alipur, and shared in the fighting on the 8th of June at Badli Serai. More fortunate than his fellow Chiefs, Sarúp Singh did noble service at the head of his own troops in the camp before Delhi as well as in the neigh-

* Lepel-Griffin's "Rajahs of the Panjab," pp. 214–18.

bouring districts; furnishing supplies, escorting convoys, repelling sorties, raising recruits, while his men fought side by side with ours at the final storming of the great rebel stronghold on the Jamna.

Another of the Sirhind Chiefs was the young Rajah of Nabha, who, with some eight hundred horse and foot and two guns, kept guard over Ludhiána from May to November 1857. A body of his troops escorted the siege-train from Philor to Delhi, and another body fought with success against the mutineers from Jalandhar. Prevented himself from marching down to Delhi, he sent thither three hundred men who did good service during the siege, while the Rajah busied himself in collecting supplies, raising fresh troops to hunt down the mutineers, and lending money to the Government.

Great too were the services rendered by the Rajah of Kapurthalla in the Jalandhar Doáb. Marching into Jalandhar at the head of his troops, he helped for some months to guard that station and to keep order throughout the province. In the following May he led his contingent into Oudh, where he and his brother Bikram Singh earned much honour for their

conspicuous courage in the field, and for the steady discipline maintained among their troops. Not less remarkable was the loyalty displayed by Sikh or Mohammadan chiefs and gentlemen in other parts of the country ruled by Sir John Lawrence. Sturdy old warriors like Tej Singh, Shamsher Singh, and many more raised regiments or armed their retainers in aid of their old antagonists of Sobráon and Gujarat. And the Sikhs enlisted into the old Bengal regiments were everywhere coming forward to reveal their comrades' plotting, or to ask for service in the Panjáb levies.

That these results were largely owing to the strong personal influence of the Chief Commissioner, working on all around him for many years past, it seems impossible to deny. Whatever help he received from others in varying degrees and ways, he it was who held the reins of government with a sure yet easy grasp, who spurred or checked the movements of his subalterns, who took or declined their counsels as he thought best, whom a strange concurrence of events had entrusted with the task of steering the ship of State through the rocks and shoals that lurked beneath it and the terrible storm that raged overhead.

In Guláb Singh, the ruler of Kashmir, Lawrence had already secured an useful and fairly trustworthy ally, and the son who presently succeeded him faithfully fulfilled the promises made by his father. On the side of Afghanistan the new-born friendship of Dost Mohammad withstood the cravings of his own ambition and the pleadings of many counsellors who would gladly have helped him to recover Peshâwar from the hands of its present masters. His letters to Edwardes, who had been instructed from Râwal Pindi to offer him a continuance of the subsidy paid to him during the Persian war, expressed in terms of Eastern richness the Amir's sympathy with our disasters and his faithful adherence to our cause.

His mind thus set at ease concerning outward dangers, Lawrence proceeded to act vigorously against the dangers that still beset him. A public loan was opened in the Panjáb. All native letters sent by post were examined without scruple; all suspicious persons seized, disarmed, and if unable to prove their innocence, locked up till further orders. "Learned Maulvis were seized in the midst of a crowd of fanatic worshippers, and men of distinction

and note were 'wanted' at dead of night."* Blow after blow was struck with telling promptitude at all symptoms of smouldering disaffection. The Movable Column under Neville Chamberlain was already doing good work. No mercy was shown to mutinous regiments at a time when every available soldier was needed for other purposes than guarding a crowd of prisoners. All outlying treasure was brought into the central stations; the jail guards were strengthened everywhere, and abundant stores were laid in at Lahor and Govindgarh. The *Purbia* or Hindustani element was gradually weeded out of the public offices and the police, while numbers of camp-followers were quietly deported out of the province. For the speedier execution of justice on proved criminals, any two civil officers might form a special commission empowered to try offenders and to inflict at need the punishment of death. Meanwhile, to use Mr. Cooper's own words, "the ordinary courts suspended not their functions, but the civil and criminal business was carried on with as much apparent calmness

* Cooper's "Crisis in the Panjab."

as if the most common-place occurrences of tranquil government existence were taking place, and the flames of rebellion were not lapping up province after province in Hindustan."*

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* Cooper's "Crisis in the Panjab," p. 23.

CHAPTER IV.

Such was the general out-look in the Panjáb during the first weeks of the rebellion, whose flames were already licking up one station after another beyond the Satlaj. We have seen what precautions Lawrence took from the outset to secure the peace of his own large province. But it was not in him at such a crisis to rest satisfied with doing his duty by that province alone. Keenly alive to the danger that lowered over the rest of Upper India, he felt himself bound to work, heart and soul, for the salvation of his countrymen outside the Panjáb. It was clear that the mutiny had "settled down"—as Edwardes put it—"into a struggle for empire under Mohammadan guidance, with the Moghal capital for its

centre." With the quick eye at once of a soldier and a statesman, the Chief Commissioner saw that Delhi must be retaken at all hazards with the least possible delay; and he was determined that no efforts, no sacrifices on his part, should be wanting to the attainment of so cardinal an end.

From the very first his thoughts had turned yet oftener to Delhi than to Pesháwar or Lahor. How promptly he pressed the need of its recapture on Lord Canning and General Anson, we have already seen. Almost at the same moment he had translated his own words into vigorous action. His own secretary, Mr. Arthur Brandreth, has lately told us how he sent for his Sikh aide-de-camp, old Nihál Singh, to help him in making out lists of all the Sikh chiefs who had suffered for the rebellion of 1848. To each of these he wrote off at once, urging them to retrieve their names and appear before him, each with a certain number of retainers. "As they came in, he formed them into the 1st Sikh Cavalry (now the celebrated 11th Bengal Cavalry), and sent them off to Delhi. I well recollect"—adds Mr. Brandreth —"the pains he took personally to inspect each retainer or recruit, and see how far he was fit

for service; and how glad he was to secure any specimen of the old Sikh cavalry."*

Fortunate indeed it was for India that he acted so wisely on the spur of the moment, before his new Sikh adherents had learned the full meaning of the revolt against our rule. From Lawrence's own inquiries and some intercepted letters from Delhi, it soon came out that the insurgents were seeking for leaders in all directions, and that some of the Sikh chiefs might have joined them had they not already been committed to our side. They were now at Delhi, they wrote, and nothing remained for them but to fight for the English whose pay they had taken.

Meanwhile Sir John kept sending urgent messages to Ambála, where General Anson was still awaiting the right moment for a march on the Moghal capital. "On to Delhi," before the rebels had time to strengthen its defences or add greatly to their numbers, was the Chief Commissioner's oft-repeated cry. Once he heard that instead of marching to Delhi, the

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* Mr. A. Brandreth's Letter in the "Times" of July 29, 1879.

military leaders talked of entrenching themselves at Ambála. "Clubs are trumps, not spades," was the answer telegraphed from Ráwal Pindi. Everything on his side was done to hasten the despatch of a siege-train from Philor. At last on the 25th of May Anson's little army had begun its march. Two days later its commander lay dead of cholera and overwork at Karnál. On the 6th of June the siege-train reached the camp of Anson's successor, Sir Henry Barnard, at Alipur, only ten miles from Delhi itself. Next morning Barnard's troops were gladdened by the arrival of Wilson's column, flushed with two days of victorious fighting on its way from Meerut.

By the victory of Badli Serai on the 8th of June our troops were enabled to seize that position on the heigh before Delhi, which they were destined hold through many a fierce struggle, amidst many forms of hardship and of danger, during the next three months. The first sight which greeted them on the morrow was the splendid corps of Guides, horse and foot, which Daly, at Lawrence's bidding, had brought down from Mardán, a distance of five hundred and eighty miles, in twenty-two of the very hottest days in the year. This

body of picked Patháns, already famous for its prowess and high soldiership, was but the first of many succours which Lawrence kept on sending from his own province to the British camp. Week after week Lawrence fed the force encamped before Delhi with fresh supplies of men, arms, and stores of every kind; deliberately draining the Panjáb of everything that might be spared, however hardly, for such a purpose, until the last available British soldier had been sent off under Nicholson, and the last detachment of Panjáb levies had marched down in charge of the last train of heavy guns equipped at Philor. But for the succours so persistently forwarded, the siege of Delhi would have been raised, for no help could have come betimes from Bengal or Bombay; and all the fair provinces between the Indus and Nipál would have been flooded by one vast sea of rebellion and armed riot.

Wherever help was needed of whatever sort in the country around Delhi, Lawrence was prepared to render it, if he could. When men were wanted at Meerut to set the Europeans free for service in the field, he sent thither a body of his new Panjábi soldiers. A small irregular force under General Van Cortlandt

was ordered to scour and hold the country in the rear of the besieging army. The besiegers were in sore need of men to work their guns: Lawrence looked up all the old Sikh gunners who had fought against us in 1849, and sent off three hundred of them at once to the British camp. A large body of Mazbi Sikhs, of the sweeper caste, were taken off work on the Bári Doáb Canal, and despatched to Delhi to serve as pioneers.* A Bilúchi regiment borrowed from Sind escorted a siege-train in July from Firozpur. When Colonel Chester was slain at Badli Serai, it was Neville Chamberlain, commander of the Movable Column, who was sent to replace him as Adjutant-General. Chamberlain's place in the Panjáb was then assigned to Nicholson, whose commanding talents and great force of character over-rode at such a crisis the claims of older and, in their way, more experienced officers.

To take one so young, so little tried in the practice of regular warfare, from his civil duties at Pesháwar, and place him at the head

* This Mazbi corps, now known as the 23rd Bengal Pioneers, afterwards did good service in China and Abyssinia.

of an army in the field, was an experiment which a ruler less sure of his own aims and means, less prompt to dare wisely, less shrewd in judging men and circumstances, and less bold in acting on his own judgment, would have shrunk from making, in view of the sacrifice which such a move entailed upon himself. But Lawrence knew what he was doing, and shrank from no sacrifice tending to the public good. Sending his own tried and trusted secretary, Major Hugh James, to relieve Nicholson, he declared that "for his own work he would get on with anyone."* At a later period, when hope in many hearts had well-nigh yielded to despair, it was Lawrence who ordered Nicholson to march down to Delhi with the bulk of his Movable Column, and urge Wilson, Barnard's successor, to stake all upon that last decisive stroke which restored the great rebel stronghold into our hands.

During the siege of Delhi few names rose into equal prominence with that of Major Hodson, the dashing leader of Hodson's Horse, the ubiquitous head of the Intelligence De-

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* Mr. Brandreth's Letter to the "Times."

partment, the bold counsellor in whom Barnard trusted, the popular hero of many a stirring tale in camp. Wherever there was work of any kind to do, Hodson was ready to bear his part in it. "There goes that 'ere Hodson"—said a tipsy soldier, as he cantered down the lines—"he 's sure to be in everything; he'll get shot, I know he will, and I'd a deal rather be shot myself—we can't do without him."* With all his wild daring he had, according to Sir Thomas Seaton, "the coolest head of any man in camp." Mr. Hervey Greathed described him as having "a rare gift of brains"; and his influence over Sir H. Barnard showed itself in the fact of his being one of the four selected by that officer to draw up, in the first days of the siege, a plan for carrying the city by a sudden attack, a plan which, but for one officer's blundering, would have broken the neck of the Mutiny by the end of June. In speaking of Hodson, let us remember that he too had been spared by Lawrence from the Panjáb.

The risks which the Chief Commissioner

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* "Twelve Years of a Soldier's Life in India."

braved in furtherance of his set purpose, however light they seemed beside the dangers that beset our countrymen elsewhere, were heavy enough to cause him and his subalterns many an anxious hour. Even in June there was a rising in Jalandhar which threatened for a moment the safety of Philor. Three regiments of mutineers marched off to strengthen the Delhi garrison and increase the odds against the besiegers. Lawrence who was still at Ráwal Pindi in the first days of July, at length resolved to disarm the native troops at that station. His arrangements for that end were skilfully made, and carried out by Colonel Campbell under the Chief Commissioner's own eyes. His own life was more than once in imminent danger, as he rode in front of Campbell's gunners, or galloped after the Sepoys retreating in panic disorder to their lines. Mr. Brandreth, who was among his attendants, has told us that but for Campbell's promptitude a shower of grape from our own guns would have swept down the little party which, through Lawrence's eagerness to avert bloodshed, thus lay between two fires. In spite of their frantic terror and their loaded muskets, Lawrence rode to and fro among the

mutineers, exhorting them to fear nothing, and avoid destruction by quietly giving up their arms. It was a moment of supreme anxiety, but the men at last obeyed, and Lawrence knew that his timely rashness had borne good fruit.

On the same evening, the 7th of July, he learned that the troops sent off by him to disarm the Sepoy regiment at Jhilam had succeeded only after an obstinate fight in driving the mutineers out of the station. Nearly half the troops remaining at Ráwal Pindi were at once despatched with all the spare ammunition to retrieve a disaster solely due to the blundering of those entrusted with the execution of his own well-drawn plans. But the news of a partially successful rising at Jhilam had found its way also down to Sialkot, which had been already stripped of its European garrison. Next morning the Sepoys repaid their Brigadier's show of confidence by shooting him to death, slaying several of his countrymen, emptying the jails, pillaging everywhere, and destroying everything which they could not carry off. Nemesis however, in the shape of Nicholson and his tireless soldiers, speedily overtook them, and very few

escaped the slaughter at Trimmú Ghát, or the clutches of Nicholson's police, to tell their comrades in Delhi how they had blackened the faces of the Sahibs.

Every week's delay in taking Delhi added to the numbers of its garrison—for fresh bands of insurgents kept streaming in from all quarters—and fanned into fresh life the disaffection smouldering beneath the surface even of the Panjáb. During July and August outbreaks occurred even among the disarmed Sepoys in several stations. The people of the Mánjha, a district surrounding Amritsar and Lahor, were known to bear no great love to their English masters. In other parts of the Panjáb men's minds were growing restless under a growing belief in our want of power to make head against the rebellion. By the end of July, when Nicholson had already turned his face towards Delhi, the whole of our white troops in the Panjáb, including a regiment lent from Sind, scarcely exceeded 4,000 men; and these, still further weakened by sickness, had among other things to keep guard over some 18,000 Sepoys, of whom 5,000 still retained their arms. While pressing messages for further help still came to Law-

rence from the camp before Delhi, there were some of his best men who counselled him, if need were, to let Delhi go, and gather up all his resources for the defence of his own province.*

Sooner than let Delhi go, the Chief Commissioner would have sacrificed, if not the whole Panjáb, at least that portion of it which lay beyond the Indus. In case of urgent need, he would have handed over to Dost Mohammad that Peshâwar valley which Ranjit Singh had wrested from the Afghan kingdom. To his thinking, and he was not one who thought lightly, a step so contrary to all former usage, so hateful to the bulk of his own followers, recommended itself not only on good military grounds, but also as a politic return for the Amir's loyalty to his new friends. To keep a strong force locked up in Peshâwar when the lives of all Englishmen in Upper India were staked upon the issue of the struggle around Delhi, seemed to Sir John a piece of suicidal folly. Had things come to the worst elsewhere, it is obvious that the move thus suggested by Sir John Lawrence would have saved his countrymen from yet

* Kaye's "Sepoy War," vol. ii. p. 616.

worse mishaps. Happily however for all concerned, the need for choosing between two great evils never arose.*

Lahor in July and August is not a pleasant halting-place for an Englishman in poor health and suffering from inflamed eyes. But duty seemed to call Lawrence thither; and thither, a few days after the Sialkot rising, he journeyed on the top of a country mail-cart, without even a mounted policeman for escort.

The picture which Mr. Brandreth draws of him working diligently day after day in his darkened room at the piles of papers brought by each post, is strikingly characteristic of the man whose calm courage, untiring industry, and clear-seeing steadiness of purpose shone out all the more brightly for the surrounding darkness. "Every morning, as the mail came in, every letter was at once disposed of, and we had to exert ourselves to see the orders carried out and all replies sent out that day

* Mr. W. S. Seton-Karr informs me that he discussed this very matter with Lord Lawrence "not very long before his death, at a time when he was taunted publicly with *wishing* to abandon the Peshawar Valley. His statement to me was that he only proposed it as an alternative measure. . . . Lord Lawrence never for a moment *wished* to abandon Peshawar under the influence of panic or fear."

without fail. . . . The way he used to clear off the piles of paper we put before him, each one fairly taken and finished as it came, was very impressive. No difficult or troublesome reference was put aside till he had finished the lighter ones which looked so inviting just below, and the vast piles of accounts of the Grand Trunk Road which were then coming in were as carefully looked through and criticised as if no mutiny was occupying our attention." Nothing was allowed to excuse any neglect of the most ordinary duty; and the machinery of government worked on with a regularity which convinced the Sikhs that "we could not really be in much trouble, as we showed no neglect or anxiety." Mr. Brandreth himself was allowed in addition to his other duties to carry on the work of his own court, "because of the tranquillising effect of the land-suits in such a troublesome part of the country." Hence it happened that the same landowners who had given us so much trouble before, now raised levies in our behalf and relieved our armed police from the task of guarding treasuries and furnishing escorts.*

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* Mr. Brandreth's Letter to the "Times."

On the 25th of July Nicholson led his soldiers across the Biyás. On the 8th of August he himself rode into the camp before Delhi, six days ahead of his men, to consult with General Wilson, and to make himself acquainted with the state of affairs in camp. The mere sight of his tall stately figure and sternly handsome face gave new heart to the war-worn defenders of the Ridge; and the subsequent arrival of his column, headed by their noble leader himself, was hailed by all men as a sure precursor of the victory yet to come. His presence alone at such a time was held to be worth a whole army. Nor was it many days before his soldiership was put successfully to the test. While our troops were yet waiting for more heavy guns from Firozpur, a strong force of rebels marched out from Delhi to try and intercept them among the swamps of Najafgarh. But Nicholson led out a picked body of troops to spoil their purpose; and his crushing defeat of the enemy on the 25th not only clinched his fame as a bold and skilful commander, but secured to our men the needed leisure for the work they had still to accomplish. Among those who hastened to congratulate the victor was Lawrence himself.

"I wish I had the power," he wrote, "of knighting you on the spot. It should be done. I hope you destroyed no end of villainous Pandis."

By the 6th of September the siege train with the last detachment of troops from the Panjáb came into Wilson's camp. From that day began the real siege of Delhi, for hitherto our men had merely held against all assailants the ground they took up three months before. Two days later the first of the new batteries opened fire. At that moment it may truly be said that all India was hanging breathless upon the issue of a gambler's throw. In many parts of the Panjáb treason was already rearing its head again, as the old belief in our power and good fortune faded away, and a growing desire to enlist on the winning side took its place. It was rumoured that the loyal Chiefs of Sirhind could no longer answer for the good conduct of their men. It was whispered that our bold Sikh followers were tired of waiting for the plunder of a city which remained untaken at the beginning of September. If Delhi were not swiftly won, it might go hard against every Englishman in Upper India. In the hills

around Marri and in lower Hazára the Mohammadans were actively plotting against our rule. The very date of a rising which was to involve the murder of British officers was fixed for the 10th of September, if by that time Delhi had not fallen.

Happily one of the Hazára chiefs betrayed this plot, through his wife, to Lady Lawrence who was staying at Marri during her husband's absence at Lahor. The Commissioner of Rá-wal Pindi and the Marri officials at once took steps to arrest the ringleaders and to avert the threatened outbreak. A few days later, on the very day that Nicholson led his stormers into Delhi, Lawrence who was still at Lahor learned that all the wild tribes in the Gogaira jungles between Lahor and Multan had risen. The men of these tribes numbered many thousands, and their country lay near the unfriendly State of Bháwalpur.

Although it was near midnight when the news reached him, Lawrence straightway despatched his old friend Nihál Singh to collect every pony and carriage he could find in the city, while he himself drove down to cantonments to see what troops could be spared for active service. Within three hours one

company of British foot with two hundred Sikh horse and three guns were marching with all speed to the scene of danger. Their timely arrival one hour before the insurgents at Gogaira, saved that station from plunder and its few English occupants from a violent death.* The desperate stroke thus promptly delivered served to dishearten the insurgents, and gain time for the dealing of further blows at a movement which might else have spread over the whole province.

Even in the camp before Delhi, when our guns were all on the spot, ready for mischief, and the troops were hungry for the final venture, there were some who still doubted the wisdom of staking everything on "the hazard of a die." But, thanks to such prompters as Baird Smith and Nicholson, bolder counsels prevailed at last, and Wilson reluctantly yielded his own judgment to the voices of men prepared even to disown his leadership rather than tolerate any further delay. As soon as the new batteries had done their work upon the walls, the storming-columns were got ready for theirs. On the 14th of Sep-

* Mr. Brandreth's Letter; Malleson's "Recreations."

tember, a day never to be forgotten by Englishmen, each column under its own leader assayed in broad daylight the tremendous feat of storming a great city begirt with lofty walls and filled with thousands of well-armed and disciplined Sepoys. How gloriously, at what a sacrifice, that feat was accomplished, everyone knows; and many of us can recall the gloom that overshadowed all our rejoicing, when it was known that the triumph of our arms had been bought with the life-blood of him who commanded the leading column, the young and all-daring John Nicholson.

Stricken to death at the age of thirty-four, he lived long enough at least to know that he had not died in vain, that in six days all Delhi was at our mercy, that the last mutineer was fleeing on the 20th of September far away from the stronghold which, but for Nicholson's efforts and example, might never have been won.

By this feat of arms, unmatched in the annals of war, the neck of the rebellion was fairly broken. It was many months yet before the monster breathed his last, but his doom was really sounded on the 21st of September. It was only after the fall of Delhi

and the capture of its King by Hodson, that our countrymen in Upper India began once more to breathe freely; for hitherto they had been sitting as it were over a loaded mine which any mischance might have fired to their destruction. What wonder indeed that, on looking back over the events of this period, Sir John Lawrence owned to a feeling of pure amazement at finding himself alive! And while his own heart went up to Heaven in thanksgivings for his country's deliverance from deadly peril, the hearts of his countrymen swelled with gratitude to the hero who, at such a time, had loomed forth a very

"tower of strength
"Which stood four-square to all the winds that blew;"

to the statesman whose forecast, coolness, and strong will enabled our Indian Empire to ride out the worst storm it has ever yet encountered. All honour to those who worked with him or under him, from Montgomery at Lahor down to the meanest private in the camp before Delhi. But without John Lawrence to guide, to inspire, to control their efforts for the common weal, to dare wisely for great ends, to make his voice heard on military as

well as civil questions, to spend himself and the resources of his province on the task of crushing rebellion in its central seat, it is almost certain that the crisis would have ended far less happily than it did. Some of his great qualities he shared with others; in some perhaps there were those who excelled him; but in no one else, not even Mr. Montgomery, were they all combined in nearly the same degree. But for him, in short, Delhi would not have been taken in September, and what would have happened then? To Lawrence at any rate, by the concurrent verdict of Wilson's officers, of Wilson himself, of Lord Canning, of the Court of Directors, of every unbiassed Briton in Northern India, was accorded the prize of honour as "saviour of India," as the prime author of Wilson's triumph, as the man to whom, "more than to any other, more than to thousands of others, was owing the conquest of Delhi and the safety of the whole North-West." *

* Trotter's "British Empire in India," vol. ii. p. 229.—It must be remembered that, during these eventful months, Lawrence was cut off from all direct communication with Lord Canning.

CHAPTER V.

With the fall of Delhi the last stirrings of rebellion in the Chief Commissioner's own province soon died away. After the collapse of the Gogaira outbreak quiet once more reigned throughout the Panjáb. Many months had yet to elapse before the same thing could be said of Rájputána, where Colonel George Lawrence nobly upheld the honour of his country in the teeth of serious dangers, or of Oudh where the chivalrous Sir Henry Lawrence had already fallen at his post of duty, or of several other provinces in which from time to time fresh bands of rebels still defied or evaded pursuit. But the peace of the Panjáb remained unbroken as if that great province were an English shire.

It was not long before the Chief Commissioner found himself charged with fresh duties. The large district of which Delhi was the capital, a district reaching from the Satlaj to the Jamna, had just been handed over by Lord Canning to the Government of the Panjáb. Regardless of heat and other discomforts, the new master of Delhi hurried off by mail-cart from Lahor to stay the hands of his countrymen from unsparing bloodshed, and to breathe new life into the political wrecks of a province whose capital had just been threatened with virtual erasure. For the cry of vengeance on the rebellious city had shaped itself into a loud demand for its utter destruction, as a warning to all traitors who dared to plot against our rule. Lord Canning's Government had so far yielded to that demand as to order the levelling of the city walls and bastions to the ground. So earnestly however did Sir John protest against a measure which would not only cost a great deal of money, but would seriously hinder the work of governing a large city surrounded by a chain of robber villages, that his engineers were allowed only to fill up the moat, and to lower the alls by a few feet.

By the end of 1857 Delhi had begun to wear its old look of busy well-doing. The affrighted citizens were once more filling the streets and lanes of the war-wasted city, as fast as they could purge themselves before the ruling powers of all active share in the massacres of May and the misdeeds of the following months. Amidst many sad traces of recent havoc the stream of busy life flowed once more along the broad Chandni Chauk, and the drone of the Maulvi reading his Koran might again be heard within the great square of the Jamma Masjid. Many a princely estate had already been forfeited, and many a traitor of mark or birth had passed more or less promptly into the hangman's hands. But Lawrence felt that enough had now been done for vengeance, and that justice might be satisfied with milder punishments after more deliberate trial in the regular courts. The same tender thoughtfulness which saved the disarmed Sepoys at Lahor from needless indignities, urged him at Delhi to restore the supremacy of civil over martial law. In the course of six months the whole of the district had been disarmed, an efficient police reorganised, justice was administered according to the Panjáb

Code, and Lawrence could truly report that order reigned throughout the Delhi territory.

Meanwhile in January 1858, the wretched old King of Delhi was brought to trial before a Commission of field-officers headed by Colonel Dawes. Found guilty of aiding and abetting in various acts of murder and rebellion, Mohammad Bahadur Shah, the last reigning prince of the house of Bábar, was sentenced to death; but the doom which perhaps he well deserved was mercifully commuted to transportation for life.

In turning a deaf ear to the popular cry for more blood, Sir John showed himself at once a true Christian and a cool-headed statesman. But from many quarters arose another cry which many an earnest Christian, in his place and circumstances, might have been tempted to take up. It was loudly asserted that the time had come when Englishmen in India should make a determined effort to win the natives from the error of their religious ways. They must no longer be "ashamed of their Christianity." The Government should cease to truckle to the religious prejudices of its heathen subjects. All claims of caste and creed were to be ignored. No favour must

be shown to heathens and idolators. The Bible should at once be made a class-book in all Government schools and colleges, and native Christians should be encouraged to flock into every department of the public service. To all such pleadings backed by the eloquence even of Colonel Edwardes the Chief Commissioner steadily refused to listen. A truer Christian perhaps never lived; but the lessons of the Mutiny had not been lost upon so apt a pupil, and he would lend himself to no schemes for making proselytes wholesale by means repugnant alike to common justice, wise statesmanship, and the living principles of his own purer faith.

Before the end of 1858 Sir John Lawrence left the scene of his hardest struggles and noblest achievements, intending never to return. His health sorely needed recruiting, and the offer of a seat in the new Council of India would enable him to combine a moderate share of useful work with the bracing influence of his native climate. A grand Cross of the Bath in 1857 and a Baronetcy in the following year were the only honours officially conferred by England on the man for whom no token of a nation's gratitude would have

seemed beyond his deserts. One of the last political acts of the dethroned East India Company was to award their greatest servant a pension of two thousand a year. The same Act of Parliament which transferred the empire of India from the Company to the Crown had converted the Chief Commissioner of the Panjáb into a Lieutenant-Governor. The new dignity however was practically reserved for Sir John's successor, Sir Robert Montgomery, who had meanwhile been doing important service in Oudh.

Returning to England, Lawrence quietly settled down to his new duties at Westminster, varied by the mild distractions of a country life in the midst of his own family. Many wondered at such a man deigning to fill a part so unobtrusive in a Council whose voices counted for nothing against the will of a President who was also a Cabinet Minister. But Sir John was above the littlenesses of vulgar ambition, and the care of a growing family quickened his natural appetite for any work that might fall to his hands.

The next few years may be passed over briefly in these pages. The work of the Indian Council was distributed among committees,

each of which looked after its own branch of public business. Sir John's large experience of revenue questions gave him the lead in that particular line, but his actual usefulness was never limited to one department only. On all matters of military or political moment his opinion carried a certain weight even with those who voted against him. The impression he made on Lord Derby who, as Lord Stanley, had charge of the India Office in 1859, was that of "a certain heroic simplicity." Even if his opportunity had never come, "you would still have felt that you were in the presence of a man capable of accomplishing great things if they were wanted, and capable also" —as it seemed to Lord Derby—"of leaving the credit of them to anybody who chose to take it."

But the time soon came when Sir John's services were needed in a higher sphere. Lord Elgin, who had not long succeeded Lord Canning as Viceroy of India, died in November 1863. Never since the days of Sir John Shore had any member of the Indian Civil Service permanently filled the post now left vacant by Lord Elgin's premature death. With manifest reluctance Sir John Lawrence agreed to fill it.

He had everything at home that could make life pleasant to a man of his moderate desires and homely tastes; but if duty called him to India, to India he would go.

When the new Viceroy landed at Calcutta in January 1864, the storm of war which had broken in the past October over the Sitána hills beyond the Panjáb frontier had already subsided, and the danger of a general rising among the border tribes, which Lawrence had been sent to grapple with, had been forestalled by the timely firmness of his acting substitute, Sir William Denison. Another cloud however began ere long to darken another side of our Indian frontier. Three months after his arrival, the new Viceroy learned that the mission which Lord Elgin had despatched into the mountains of Bhotán on the east of Sikhim, in order to obtain redress for the raids of kidnapping Bhotias on British ground, had altogether failed to achieve its purpose. And worse still, the failure had been crowned with gross insults heaped upon the envoy himself. In imminent danger of his life, he was forced to sign a treaty surrendering the very lands in dispute.

After some vain attempts to avoid a quarrel

which had been unwisely provoked, Sir John Lawrence in November declared war against the insolent mountaineers. A small force entered the hills in four separate columns, and took up as many commanding posts in the enemy's country. Mismanagement however and a sickly season delayed the issue of a well-planned move. The post at Dewángíri was retaken by a few ill-armed Bhotias, and two of our guns were abandoned in a shameful retreat before a contemptible foe. A second campaign on a larger scale ere long retrieved the blunders and mishaps of the first. The recapture of Dewangíri, followed by the seizure of Dhálimkot, impressed the Bhotias with the vanity of further resistance. Before the end of 1865 they had agreed to all our demands. The treaty forced upon our envoy was given up, and certain Duárs, or lowlands of Bhotán, were formally transferred to our rule in return for a yearly payment of Rs. 25,000 to the Bhotia Government, as a virtual bribe for its future good behaviour.

But British honour could not be satisfied without the surrender of our lost guns. On this point the Viceroy stood out against Bhotia obstinacy as well as faint-hearted counsels at

his own door. With his own hand he drew up a letter of instructions to a trusted officer commanding one of our foreposts in Bhotan.* The instructions were promptly obeyed, the guns were given up, and so ended a troublesome little war which brought us little honour, but the ending of which left the Viceroy free to devote his best energies for some years to come to the well-being of the millions entrusted to his charge.

He had not been idle in the meanwhile. After spending the summer of 1864 at Simla, he halted at Lahor on his way down the country, to meet his old Sikh friends and followers on the scene of his old successes. In simple but impressive terms he told his hearers in their own tongue of the deep interest which the Queen of England and her husband took in their well-being. Then, passing in brief review the measures taken by successive rulers, from Sir Henry Lawrence to Sir Robert Montgomery, to further that well-being in every possible way, he closed the meeting with the utterance of an earnest hope that God would guard and guide all there present, and give them all things needful for their good.

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* Malleson's "Recreations," p. 165.

Among the reforms which Sir John Lawrence had most at heart was a scheme for settling the vexed question of land tenures in Oudh and the Panjáb. It was a question overlaid with difficulties which a weaker, a more cautious ruler, or one less deeply conversant with his subject, would have been contented to let alone. Sir John however knew what he was doing; and his efforts to promote the greatest happiness of the greatest number were guided by the fruits of a long experience, and by a strong desire to deal equal justice among all classes, high or low. In his eyes the prescriptive rights of the poorest husbandman were as sacred as those of the mightiest Talukdár. He knew that our English notions about absolute ownership of the land could not be fairly or safely applied to a country where immemorial usage had established a system of land-tenure utterly at variance with all such notions. Through long years of anarchy and misrule the right of hereditary cultivators to retain their holdings on payment of a fixed rent had never been formally disallowed, however often it might have been disregarded. That right indeed had been recognised more or less clearly in nearly all our settlements of the land-

revenue outside Bengal, and even there it had been formally reasserted by the Act of 1859. Why should it not be recognised in Oudh also and the Panjáb?

To secure its full recognition in those provinces, the Governor-General laid before his Legislative Council two Bills defining the rights of tenant-cultivators, hereditary or at will, in each province. Actual occupancy of the same land for thirty years was declared equivalent to an hereditary tenure, liable only to payment of the customary rent, and free from all risk of summary eviction. On behalf of the tenant-at-will it was decreed that he too should not be turned out of his holding without due cause shown, or without receiving fair compensation for his past outlay. These Bills, during their passage through Council, evoked some murmurs from the Talukdárs of Oudh, who resented any show of encroachment on the privileges secured to them by Lord Canning. Even in the Panjáb there were not a few landholders who cried out against a measure which merely affirmed and followed out the principles accepted in former years by themselves. Some too of the leading officials expressed a sympathy more fervent than discreet with a body

of landholders whose lawful rights no one, least of all Sir John Lawrence, dreamed of assailing.

One of the rarest virtues, if not the rarest under the sun, is justice, as displayed not in thought only, but in deed. This virtue Sir John possessed in a remarkable degree. For the full exercise of this virtue many things are requisite; among others a clear head, a large heart, and unbending honesty of purpose. Because Lawrence honestly tried to hold the balance fair between landlord and tenant, because he set himself in this instance to protect the weak from the greed or tyranny of the strong, because he strove to arrest the process which was fast turning the men who cultivated the land their fathers had once owned into mere serfs, some of his opponents went so far as to charge him with an absurd design to sweep the landlords off the face of the earth. The opposition to his measures was carried into the council-room at Westminster, and it was not till 1868 that the Bills in question were allowed to become law.

In the same spirit of politic justice the Viceroy afterwards framed a measure securing to the tenant-farmers of the North-West Provinces compensation for all improvements made on

their holdings at their own expense. In the same spirit also, during the last days of his rule, he carried through his Council a Bill enabling the Talukdárs of Oudh to borrow money at need from the Government for the due improvement of their lands.

In many other acts of public usefulness the Viceroy's hand was clearly traceable. From the time of Lord Canning, the Governor-General and his Council had shared among them the different branches of the public business. One member had special charge of the finances, another of the army, a third of legislation, a fourth of home affairs, and so on; while the foreign department, which included the management of our relations with all the dependent princes and chiefs of India, was reserved for the Governor-General himself. This "semblance of a Cabinet,"* as it has justly been called, differs from an English Cabinet in that far larger controlling powers are wielded by the President in the former, while he and his colleagues still deal collectively with many questions which in England would be settled by a single minister. In the region of public works, of popular instruction, of

* Wyllie's "External Policy of India."

sanitary reform, of municipal government, of progress in peaceful industry, and even of fiscal and financial processes, the Viceroy himself inspired or helped to mould many of the measures which signalised his rule.

To the need of encouraging the growth of roads, railways, and irrigation-works, as a means of preventing or mitigating famines, no one was more alive than the erewhile ruler of the Panjáb. Always careful of the public money, he did not hesitate to spend it freely on objects tending to the ultimate good of his people. It was only after repeated knockings at the doors of the India Office, that he won the sanction of the Secretary of State to a grand scheme of canals, tanks, dams, and embankments, the cost of which should be partly defrayed by loans. In 1867 a number of engineers were sent out from England to aid the Public Works Department in carrying on this noble warfare against droughts and floods. Before Lawrence left India, the campaign had been fairly opened on a scale involving a large outlay for many years of steady labour.

His efforts in this direction were quickened by the lessons of the Orissa Famine. Early in 1866 the signs of impending scarcity in that

province grew visible to those who could read them aright. But the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal and his Board of Revenue ignored or under-rated the danger; and before their eyes were fully opened, the season for throwing supplies by sea into the doomed province had gone by. For weeks past the Viceroy himself had felt uneasy on this score, and the Bengal Government had been urged to make careful inquiries on the spot. Sir Cecil Beadon's cheering assurances allayed his chief's fears, and he went off with his Council to Simla. There however the old misgivings again beset him; and had he only felt himself as free to act on his own judgment now as in the brave days of old at Lahor and Rawalpindi, a great disaster might have been averted. But the counsels or the apathy of his colleagues overrode his own views, and the Local Government continued to do nothing. For want of timely succours, one-fourth of the people of Orissa died of famine or its attendant diseases within a twelvemonth after Sir C. Beadon had reported all well.

In the progress of the railway system planned and set on foot by Lord Dalhousie, his old subaltern showed a lively interest. Had his advice been followed by the home authorities,

a complete line of railway from Karáchi to Lahor would have been laid down and opened before 1870. He too it was who first insisted on the policy of exchanging the old system of guaranteed railway companies for the cheaper system of railways made and managed directly by the State. The improvements made in the telegraph service during his rule were mainly owing to the Viceroy's own action. Many hundred miles of new line were opened, the whole length of wire was nearly doubled, and before he left the country a message could be flashed from any one station to any other, however distant, at an uniform charge of one rupee. The first germs of the Forest Department were also planted by the same fostering hand, as a means of supplying railways with fuel and preserving large tracts of forest from destruction or decay.

Sir John's care for the interests of trade and industry showed itself in various ways. With the progress of civil war in America there had sprung up a loud demand for Indian cotton to feed the mills of Lancashire. The demand continuing after the war was over, Sir John Lawrence saw how much could be done for the Indian cotton-grower by timely

encouragement on the part of the State. For this purpose, in 1866, he appointed a Cotton Commissioner for the Central Provinces and the Berars, and two years later the duties of this officer were extended to the cotton-fields in the North-West Provinces. Through Sir John's influence the ruler of Kashmír was persuaded to abolish or reduce the tolls which hampered the development of Indian trade with Ladákh and Turkistán. Like concessions were afterwards obtained from the headstrong King of Burmah; and a well-meant effort to open out new lines of trade with Western China was made in 1868, when Captain Sladen started from Mandalay on his exploring mission to the Panthay cities of Yunnan.

If the provision of fiscal ways and means rested mainly with Sir Charles Trevelyan and his successor Mr. Massey, the Viceroy's influence often helped to determine the course pursued by his Finance Minister, whether in amending the Indian tariffs, or in devising new forms of taxation. His sympathy with the dumb millions led him to withstand all schemes for raising the salt duties which pressed hard enough already on their means of living. Nor would he hear of any increased tax on tobacco,

the one cheap universal solace of the poorest classes. His sanction on the other hand was readily given to any scheme for lowering the customs duties, especially on saltpetre, the trade in which had seriously declined under the burdens imposed in 1860. What new taxation might be needed, should fall, he thought, on the wealthier middle classes, who paid nothing towards the maintenance of a rule under which they prospered as they had never done before. For this reason he steadily supported Mr. Massey's efforts to reach those classes by means of a licence-tax on all trades yielding a profit above fifty pounds a year.

It was under the same auspices that a sanitary commissioner was first appointed to each Presidency, in order to plan and carry out measures for improving the general health of the people, and guarding the military and civil stations from the inroads of preventible disease. In furtherance of the former object, municipal committees, largely composed of natives with a civil officer at their head, were for the first time established in the North-West Provinces, with power to raise taxes for sanitary and other purposes on the towns and villages placed under

their control. Important reforms were also carried out in the police of each province and in the management of the central jails.

The cause of popular education found in Sir John Lawrence an earnest and enlightened champion. Under his fostering care new schools were opened yearly in fresh districts, and larger and yet larger grants in aid flowed out of the public treasury. In the Panjáb an attempt, the first of its kind, was made to bring girls as well as boys under the schoolmaster's influence. Ere long the experiment was repeated elsewhere, and before Lawrence left India, fifty-four thousand girls were learning their lessons in two thousand schools. By that time also there had been established in each Presidency a normal school, managed by English ladies, in which the girls of one generation learned to become the teachers of the next. By the end of 1868 the whole number of pupils in State-aided schools and colleges had risen to seven hundred thousand, educated in nineteen thousand schools, at a cost to the State of only eight hundred thousand pounds a year.

CHAPTER VI.

One noteworthy feature of Sir John Lawrence's government was the zeal with which he threw himself into any likely scheme for bettering the health, comfort, and moral welfare of the British soldier, the real mainstay of our rule in India. Careless of economy in such a cause, he spent some millions on a noble system of double-storeyed barracks, which combined the largest share of breathing-room above for each soldier by night with ample means of daily employment and recreation on the ground-floor. Reading-rooms, workshops, prayer-rooms, gymnasia, even billiard and bagatelle tables, supplied the soldier with many wholesome inducements to improve the hours too often wasted in sleep or utter idleness. Much also was done to widen the range of outdoor

amusements and to encourage profitable labour in soldiers' gardens. Lawrence's efforts in this direction were rewarded by a steady decline in the death-rate of the British troops and in the average numbers of the sick.

Nor did he pay less heed to the well-being of the British sailors who yearly swell the numbers sojourning in the great commercial capital on the Húghli. In place of the old Sailors' Home, which lay in the worst quarter of Calcutta, amidst slums tenanted by prostitutes, thieves, and arrack-sellers, he resolved to open a new and larger Home in a neighbourhood less harmful to the moral and physical health of his poor countrymen. To the private subscriptions invited for that purpose he himself contributed largely, and the fruits of volunteer charity were supplemented by a liberal grant from the public purse.

In this connection a word may be said in praise of the Viceroy's efforts to deal with a nuisance caused by the growth of English enterprise in India. For some years past many Indian towns and stations had been troubled by the presence of white loafers who lived, from choice or necessity, on the alms of their countrymen or on anything they could beg or

pilfer in the bazaars. These lawless, masterless vagabonds, who preyed upon the weak and cringed before the strong, were a terror to all respectable natives and a crying scandal to their own countrymen, if not a real danger to our rule. Some of them were old convicts from Australia, others were runaway seamen, or soldiers who had been discharged or drummed out of their regiments. A few had been thrown out of employment either by mischance or their own fault. How to deal with this new heritage of evil was a question which sorely troubled the minds of Anglo-Indian statesmen. Before the end of 1868 Sir John Lawrence had laid before his Council a Bill which promised to make short work with vagrants of the sturdiest type, while it gave a helping hand to those who were willing to work if they had the chance. Under his successor the Bill became law.

In the long list of measures drafted by the wise and learned law-member of the Viceroy's Council, since known to Europe as Sir Henry Maine, there were not a few besides those already named which owed their birth or their final enactment to the Viceroy himself. Among these may be reckoned the Acts which legalised marriage according to their own rites among

Hindus of the new Brahmo faith, and the re-marriage of native converts, an Act for the better protection of coolie emigrants, and two Acts for the prevention of venereal disease and the medical treatment of its female victims.

The new furlough regulations for the civil and military services, the steady admission of qualified natives to posts hitherto filled by Europeans, the promotion of a scheme of meteorological observations along the Bay of Bengal, the establishment of dispensaries and civil hospitals in British Burma, the foundation of a college for civil engineers at Rúrki, the inquiries conducted by a Currency Commission into various schemes for extending the use of gold and paper as money, all these and such-like measures may be cited as evidence of the leading part taken by the Viceroy himself in the conduct of public business. If Sir John was fortunate in the men who worked under him, from the rulers of large provinces and his colleagues in Council down to his own secretaries, political agents, and the officers in charge of public works, it was fortunate too for India that the strongest man of all was at their head. He also it was who first insisted on the need of levying cesses for roads and education

on the Zamindars of Bengal. And to his warm advocacy may be ascribed Lord Mayo's subsequent adoption of a well-considered scheme for transferring to the provincial governments the sole management of all funds set aside for local purposes. Under the new system, as first applied in 1871, a certain proportion of the general revenue is yearly allotted to each of the great provinces for disbursement on roads, schools, jails, police, and some other items formerly supervised by the central Government. Each local governor has been made free to frame his own budget, to spend as he chooses the money assigned him from the common fund, and to raise new taxes at need from his own province. Under the old system he could not spend more than a few rupees for any purpose, however needful, without the sanction of the Supreme Government.

Mindful of the lessons taught by the great Mutiny, Lawrence sought to insure the safety of his countrymen against future revolts by ordering the erection at certain places of fortified posts, which might serve to protect our arsenals, overawe the disaffected, or furnish shelter to the sick and helpless in time of need. When drought once more visited Northern

India in 1868, Sir John Lawrence promptly came forward to aid the local Governments in their efforts to avert a famine and relieve distress. Happily the danger soon passed away from our own provinces; but in thirsty, roadless Rájputána famine raged long and sore, although the princes of the country, spurred on by the Viceroy's counsels and example, vied with each other and with the neighbouring rulers of Indor and Gwáliár in carrying out the relief-measures suggested by the Residents at their Courts. Relief-works were set on foot, remissions of land-revenue ordered, transit duties on grain suspended, subscriptions opened and supplemented by timely grants from each prince's treasury. The Viceroy himself advanced loans for the purpose of cutting roads in a province which sadly needed them.

In all his dealings with the native princes and chiefs of India, Lawrence acted steadily up to his own principle of leaving them free, within certain limits, to rule their own people after their own fashion. He stooped neither to flatter nor to bully them. His advice, when needed, they could always count upon; nor did he stint his praise whenever they deserved it. If he failed to inspire them with

23612

the love they afterwards felt for Lord Mayo, they learned at least to respect him as an honest friend, and to trust him as a master who would never blame or coerce them without just cause. So long as they kept the peace of their own realms and governed fairly well according to their lights, they knew that he would not task them beyond their strength. Twice only was he driven to enforce among them the duty owed to the Paramount Power. In 1867, the Nawáb of Tonk in Rájputána was proved on the clearest evidence to have planned and effected the treacherous murder of one of his Rájput barons, the Thákur of Láwa. So glaring an outrage, crowning former misdeeds, called for punishment. The offending Nawáb was carried off a prisoner to Benares, and his young heir was placed on the forfeit throne.

In the following year the Rajah of Jodhpur, another Rájput state, having worn out the Viceroy's patience by a long course of misrule and quarrelling with his nobles, received a stern warning to mend his ways on pain of sharing the fate of his fellow-ruler at Tonk. Luckily for himself, the royal offender came to his senses before the six months' grace allowed by the Viceroy had fully expired.

For some years past no raid of any importance had ruffled the peace of the Panjáb frontier. But in 1868 a murderous attack of Hasanzai Patháns on a frontier post in Hazára led to the mustering of a strong force under General Wilde, for the purpose of making a grand demonstration against the hill-tribes on the left bank of the Indus. The blow thus aimed in the wilds of the Hindu Kush was meant by the Viceroy to strike dismay into the hearts of Wáhábi plotters on the Ganges in Bahár, who had been forwarding money and arms to their exiled countrymen beyond the frontier. After a little desultory fighting, the campaign resolved itself into a military parade through the heart of the Black Mountain. Each of the tribes in turn sued for peace and sent in hostages. A few villages were burned down, some fines levied on the chief offenders; and the Hindustani refugees, hunted out of Swát and disowned by the tribes with whom they had plotted, were glad to seek safer hiding-places beyond the Indus.

Among the native troops employed in this little war were some who had taken part, a few months earlier, in Sir Robert Napier's well-planned and thoroughly successful march to

Magdála. For the brilliant issues of the Abyssinian campaign some credit must be claimed for the Viceroy, at whose suggestion the sole conduct of the war was entrusted to the skilful engineer officer then commanding the Bombay army, and on whose shoulders rested the chief burden of the preparations needed to ensure success in an enterprise full of hazard from first to last.

It remains to speak of the Viceroy's foreign policy, with especial reference to Afghánistán. That policy was in perfect keeping with all the best traits of Sir John's character, with the whole tenour of his public career. To that policy he adhered throughout with a steadiness unshaken by all the voices of adverse criticism, by all the pressure which rash schemers and reckless politicians brought to bear upon him both in India and at home.

With the death of the aged Dost Mohammad in 1863 began a new phase in the affairs of the country he had ruled so ably for more than twenty years. From that moment "the Nemesis of Mohammadan polygamy, in the usual form of children by different mothers scrambling for the inheritance," laid its "curse of anarchy and civil war heavily on Afgháni-

stán."* Sher Ali Khán, the son of his father's own choosing, applied to the Indian Government for help in the struggle already impending with his elder brothers, Mohammad Afzal and Mohammad Azím Khán. Beyond acknowledging Sher Ali as the new Amir and his eldest son as the heir-apparent, Sir John Lawrence declined to meddle with the internal affairs of his Afghan neighbours. He remembered how earnestly in 1857 the old Amir had entreated him never to take part in the strife which would certainly break out among his sons, but to let them fight it out by themselves, and then acknowledge the winner as king.

The Viceroy's sympathies might go with Sher Ali, but to support him even with arms and money would have been a costly and perilous mistake. It would have turned against Sher Ali the bulk of his best followers; it would have drawn us into entanglements fatal to India's financial well-being; and it would have given Russia, if she were so minded, a decent pretext for meddling in Afghán affairs. Sir John Lawrence knew the Afgháns better than most men, better indeed than any English-

* Wyllie's "External Policy of India," p. 24.

man of his day. He saw that strict neutrality was the best way to secure the confidence and goodwill of the Afghán nation, nor could he regard as waste-paper the treaty which bound us in 1855 to respect the Afghan territories and "never to interfere therein." In 1866 he rebuked his Vakíl at Kábul for making overtures of friendship to the wily Azím Khán. When Afzal Khán became master of Kábul, he refused to acknowledge him as ruler also in Herát and Kandahár, where Sher Ali still held his ground. "If your Highness"—he wrote to Afzal Khán—"is able to consolidate your Highness's power in Kábul, and is sincerely desirous of being a friend and ally of the British Government, I shall be ready to accept your Highness as such; but I cannot break the existing engagements with Amír Sher Ali Khán."

Such was the policy which, in repeated letters to the India Office, he declared himself firmly bent on pursuing; the policy of "friendship towards the actual rulers, combined with rigid abstention from interference in domestic feuds." "By this means"—he wrote in 1867—"we shall be enabled to maintain our influence in Afghanistan far more effectually than

by any advance of our troops—a contingency which could only be contemplated in the last resort, which would unite as one man the Afghán tribes against us, and which would paralyse our finances."

At last in 1868 the fortune of war, which had long blown hard against Sher Ali, bore him back in triumph to Kábul, and ere long left him firmly seated on the throne whence he had been driven three years before. Afzal Khán had died in 1867, and Azím Khán, his duly acknowledged successor, was already a fugitive powerless for further resistance in Balkh. In Afghán eyes Sher Ali, by virtue of his latest victories, not of his father's choice, was now the rightful sovereign. The time had come when Sir John Lawrence could exchange his attitude of strict neutrality for one of friendly support. His own term of office had well-nigh run out, and the Home Government through Sir Stafford Northcote gave him full leave to "pursue his own policy." In his letter of congratulation, he told the Amir that he was prepared not only to maintain the old bonds of amity and goodwill, "but, so far as may be practicable, to strengthen those bonds." To help Sher Ali in securing his hard-won

throne, six lakhs of rupees—£60,000—and several thousand muskets were placed at his disposal. In a later and farewell letter Sir John informed the Amir that another six lakhs would shortly be placed at his entire control, in proof of the Viceroy's desire to see "a strong, a just, and a merciful government" established throughout Afghánistán; all that the Viceroy asked in return being "abiding confidence, sincerity, and goodwill."

The gratified Amir had already expressed a wish to meet the Viceroy somewhere on the frontier. But the latter had no time to spare for such a purpose, and it was left for his successor, Lord Mayo, to cement in the memorable Ambála Darbár the good understanding thus auspiciously begun. If Sher Ali failed to get those guarantees of help and protection against all assailants for which he asked, he left Ambála thoroughly assured of our desire to act up to the spirit of the treaties made with his father in 1855 and 1857. He was plainly told that "under no circumstances should a British soldier ever cross his frontier to assist him in coercing his rebellious subjects; that no European officers would be placed as Residents in his cities; that no fixed subsidy or money

allowance would be given for any named period; that no treaty would be entered into obliging us under *every* circumstance to recognise him and his descendants rulers of Afghánistán." * At the same time Lord Mayo promised to render him "all the moral support in his power"; to supply him at need with money, arms, ammunition, and native workmen; and to correspond freely with him through the Commissioner of Pesháwar and our native agents in Afghánistán; "he on his part undertaking to do all he can to maintain peace on our frontier, and to comply with all our wishes on matters connected with trade."

Sir John Lawrence's Afghan policy, founded on the good faith of former treaties, on a prudent dislike to all entangling alliances with semi-barbarous neighbours, and on a proud contempt for the schemes of restless panic-mongers, thus reaped its natural fruit. The lessons learned at the Ambála Conference in 1869 were not thrown away upon Sher Ali, who returned to Kábul convinced that he had nothing to fear and much to gain from the

* "The Afghan Blue Book for 1878."

moral support of his English friends, so long as he followed their advice and acted up to his own promises. The policy thus confirmed by Lord Mayo was taken up in a like spirit by his worthy successor, Lord Northbrook. For eight years Sher Ali ruled his subjects in fair accordance with the pledges exchanged at Ambála. It was only when the panic-mongers found a ready tool in Lord Northbrook's showy successor, that the treaties and promises of past years were ruthlessly set aside, and the Amir himself was goaded by British arts into furnishing a sorry pretext for the war which hastened his own death and broke his kingdom into pieces.

Under the strong sway of Sir John Lawrence however the Firebrand Party, as we may call it, had little chance of carrying their ends. They might cry aloud, whether from Bombay, then governed by the clever but rash-headed Sir Bartle Frere, or from the India Office prompted by the clever but craze-ridden Sir Henry Rawlinson, or in certain newspapers published in London and Calcutta. But in the Viceroy's Council at any rate there was none to heed them. Sir John Lawrence quietly put aside all proposals for a "forward

policy" in Khelát or Afghánistán, as useless for the purpose of counteracting Russia, and dangerous to the well-being of India herself. With the strongest natural frontier in the world, bordered by deserts and rugged hills, with the sea at Bombay and Karáchi for our base, with a powerful army well found in all warlike equipments, and ready to move by rail or road on any threatened point, with a people well governed, lightly taxed, and generally contented, he knew that we could well afford to wait behind our own defences for the first signs of any danger looming many hundred miles off on the Oxus and the steppes of Turkistán.

The advance to Quetta, as specially urged by the "Bombay School," he, in common with most men of sense, regarded as a gross military blunder no less than a wanton menace to Afghánistán. When the Russians had overrun Khokán, beaten down Bokhára, and carried their standards from the Jaxartes to the Oxus, Sir John Lawrence still kept his head cool, still refused to see India's danger in Russia's latest advance. It was not that he underrated Russia's power for possible mischief, but that he had taken careful measure of his own

resources, and knew that, happen what might, even in the most unlikely event of a Russian invasion, the true danger to our rule lay nowhere across the frontier, but in India itself. To his thinking a Russian invasion of India was not more likely and a good deal less feasible than a French invasion of England. "We object"—he wrote in January 1869—"to any active interference in the affairs of Afghánistán by the deputation of a high British officer with or without a contingent, or by the forcible or amicable occupation of any post or tract in that country beyond our own frontier, inasmuch as we think such a measure would, under present circumstances, engender irritation, defiance, and hatred in the minds of the Afgháns, without in the least strengthening our power either for attack or defence. We think it impolitic and unwise to decrease any of the difficulties which would be entailed on Russia, if that Power seriously thought of invading India, as we should certainly decrease them if we left our own frontier, and met her half-way in a difficult country, and possibly in the midst of a hostile or exasperated population. We foresee no limits to the expenditure which such a move might require, and we protest

against the necessity of having to impose additional taxation on the people of India, who are unwilling, as it is, to bear such pressure for measures which they can both understand and appreciate. And we think that the objects which we have at heart may be attained by an attitude of readiness and firmness on our frontier, and by giving all our care and expending all our resources for the attainment of practical and sound ends, over which we can exercise an effective and immediate control." *

Such were the words of weighty wisdom in which the Viceroy, speaking for all his Council, condemned the wild schemes broached by Sir H. Rawlinson in the Memorandum which Sir S. Northcote had forwarded from the India Office a few months before. Those words summed up the recorded opinions of such men as Lord Sandhurst, the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Donald Macleod, Lieutenant-Governor of the Panjáb, Sir Henry Davies who presently succeeded him, Sir Henry Durand, a soldier-statesman of the highest mark, Sir Henry Norman, afterwards military member of the

* "Afghan Blue Book—1878."

Viceroy's Council, Sir Richard Temple, the future Governor of Bombay, and several other statesmen of like repute. Not one officer of any experience in frontier affairs dissented from the views expressed in this last warning utterance of the retiring Viceroy.

Having thus shown what ought not to be done, Sir John proceeded, in fit and few words, to point out the true direction in which the energies of Anglo-Indian statesmen should be employed for the safe-guarding of our Indian Empire, by the careful husbanding of all those resources, moral and material, which would best enable us to meet any storm from within or without. Finally, by way of further precaution, he repeated the suggestion thrown out by himself two years before, that some attempt should be made to arrive at a clear and friendly understanding with Russia, for the purpose of counteracting unfounded rumours and preventing unnecessary alarms. The Court of St. Petersburg should be told "in firm but courteous language," that it must not interfere in the affairs of Afghanistan or of any other State on the Indian frontier. And it would be well, he added, if our relations with the Persian Court were henceforth placed

under the entire control of the Minister for India.

This noble State-paper was written after the Viceroy's return to Calcutta from his usual summer retreat in the Simla Hills. His annual holiday at Simla would have been deemed by well-informed critics a season of very hard work. His devotion to duty indeed allowed him little rest from the labours of an office which taxes to their utmost the energies of the strongest and most industrious. On his way down country in the previous November he had formally opened the railway which linked Ambála with Delhi, and brought Calcutta within two days' easy reach of the great northern station at the foot of the Himalayas. One of his last public acts in Calcutta was the passing of a Bill to cheapen the postage on Indian letters, by doubling the standard weight of all letters carried for half an anna, or three farthings.

CHAPTER VII.

And now the time had come when Lawrence was to bid a last farewell to the country in which he had spent the best years of a blameless, useful, and honourable life. His rule had been eminently a rule of peace and of steady progress in all peaceful labours. Popularity he had never courted and in general society he made no attempt to shine. His simple manners had small charm for many of the people who enjoyed the hospitalities of Government House. He lacked the courtliness which covers a multitude of worse shortcomings, and he had no taste for mere pomp and show. His very position as Viceroy rendered him a mark for the jealous criticisms of that Civil Service from whose ranks he had

sprung. With the army perhaps he was more popular, and among all classes there were some at least who knew that a great man was about to leave them; a man who, if he had done nothing for mere glory, had done many things which should win him a conspicuous place in the Valhalla of English worthies.

On the 11th of January 1869, Lawrence took his seat at a farewell dinner given by a large and brilliant company of officers and civil servants, with Sir William Mansfield, afterwards Lord Sandhurst, in the chair. The toast of the evening was prefaced by the chairman with an eloquent summary of the Viceroy's claims on the gratitude of his countrymen. In the course of his reply Sir John Lawrence spoke with kindly warmth of the great help he had received from his fellow-workers, while a storm of prolonged cheering re-echoed his appeals for justice and kind feeling towards the people of India. In defending his foreign policy he declared that he "had never kept back from war when honour and justice required it." To the charge of following a supine and inactive policy in Central Asia he gave an emphatic contradiction. "I have very carefully watched"—he said—"all that has gone

on in these distant countries." It was true that he had resolutely set his face against all projects which seemed to involve active interference in the affairs of Central Asia, because such interference "would almost certainly lead to war, the end of which no one could foresee, and which would involve India in heavy debt, or necessitate the imposition of fresh taxation, to the impoverishment of the country, and to the unpopularity of our rule." Our true policy, he added, is "to avoid such complications; to consolidate our power in India; to give to its people the best government we can; to organise our administration in every department on a system which will combine economy with efficiency; and so to make our government strong and respected in our own vast territories." By so doing and standing fast on our own border, we should be all the better prepared to repel invasion, if invasion ever were to come. In view of what has since happened, these farewell counsels of a ruler who showed himself equal to every need have all the bitter significance of a prophecy whose fulfilment is going on before our eyes.

On the following day the retiring Viceroy stood before the grand entrance into Govern-

ment House to welcome his successor in due form. The scene has been well described by Dr. W. Hunter. "At the top of the stairs stood the wearied veteran Viceroy, wearing his splendid harness for the last day; his face blanched and his tall figure shrunken by forty years of Indian service; but his head erect, and his eye still bright with the fire which had burst forth so gloriously in India's supreme hour of need. Around him stood the tried counsellors with whom he had gone through life, a silent, calm semicircle in suits of blue and gold, lit up by a few scarlet uniforms. At the bottom the new Governor-General jumped lightly out of the carriage, amid the saluting of troops and glitter of arms, his large athletic form in the easiest of summer costumes, with a funny little coloured neck-tie, and a face red with health and sunshine. As he came up the tall flight of stairs with a springy step, Lord Lawrence, with a visible feebleness, made the customary three paces forward to the edge of the landing-place to receive him."*

On the 18th of January Sir John Lawrence

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* Hunter's "Life of the Earl of Mayo," vol. i. p. 178.

received a farewell address from the citizens of Calcutta. Early the next morning he took his way through lines of troops down to Prinsep's Ghât, where a parting cheer, led by Lord Mayo himself, and warmly taken up by a large crowd of spectators, followed him on board the yacht waiting to bear his party down the Húgli to the mail-steamer in which he had taken his passage home. As he sat carelessly on a table on the deck of the *Sir William Peel*, few of those on shore could have guessed how deeply he was moved by that farewell outburst of popular regard.*

In spite of his splendid salary as Governor-General, he left India comparatively a poor man, for his large private charities had greatly reduced the amount of his actual savings. His promotion to the peerage, with the title of Baron Lawrence of the Panjáb and Grately, was the first mark of national gratitude that welcomed his return home. As a means of helping him to support his new dignity, the Council of India converted his annuity of two thousand pounds into a pension for his own

* "Allen's Indian Mail" for 1869.

life and that of his next successor to the title. Far more welcome to such a man were the cheers that greeted him from both sides of the House of Lords, when, on the 19th of April, the new peer rose to speak in support of a Bill prepared by the Duke of Argyll for shortening the tenure of a seat in the Council of India to ten years. From that time until the year of his death Lord Lawrence seldom failed to take part in the discussion of any great Indian question brought before the Lords.

Nor was this the only field of public usefulness in which the retired Viceroy was destined to labour. In the winter of 1870 he was elected Chairman of the new London School Board, which was then about to conduct the great experiment of educating the millions on the principles laid down in the memorable School Act of that year. His plain good sense, his well-known honesty of purpose, his firmness, energy, and ripe experience marked him out as eminently fitted to attack a problem not unlike that which he had helped so largely to solve for British India. The steadiness with which, in spite of his own strong religious feelings, he had set his face in India against all attempts to turn State schools into engines of

proselytism, gave sure promise of the fairness with which the new Chairman would hold the balance in this country also between the claims of rival religious sects. To the work of this new office—and in such hands it would be no mere sinecure—Lord Lawrence applied his best energies during the next four years.

Meanwhile the Ministry of Mr. Gladstone was honestly striving to carry out the policy prescribed by Lord Lawrence with regard to Russian movements in Central Asia. Through the agency of such counsellors as Lord Granville and the Duke of Argyll, a friendly understanding with the great Northern Power was ere long brought about. The Russian Government agreed to look upon Afghanistan as lying wholly outside their political purview, while the English Government promised to use their best influence to keep Sher Ali from meddling in the affairs of Turkoman States beyond the Oxus. In India Lord Northbrook followed in the steps of Lord Mayo and Lord Lawrence, unmoved even by the senseless clamour which the Russian successes against Khiva revived among politicians of the alarmist school. The pledges given by former Viceroys to Afghan Amirs were renewed with yet clearer assurances

at the Simla Conference of 1873; and the settled policy of successive Viceroys, from Dalhousie to Northbrook, was still the policy which found most favour with the Government at home.

But a change of Ministry befel in 1874, and the panic-mongers began to raise their voices anew. In a letter written in June of that year to Sir John Kaye, then Political Secretary at the India Office, Sir Bartle Frere once more unfurled the flag of a forward policy in Central Asia. The scheme propounded by him at great length bears a close and curious resemblance to that which Lord Northbrook's successor was ere long to carry out. This letter was printed and circulated among the members of the India Council. Lord Lawrence replied in a well-reasoned Memorandum, vindicating his own policy as based on long and close acquaintance with Afghan character, and detailing his objections to any course of action which could only give needless offence to Russia without effectually barring her advance, while it would prove ruinous to the finances of India by leading us into "difficulties and complications such as we experienced in 1838 in Afghanistan." It was enough for the Afghans to know that in many respects our interests ac-

corded with theirs; but we must be "the sole judges how and when we shall help them in an emergency such as an invasion by Russia." The great point, he added, "in this matter is that Russia should understand that England is prepared to defend her hold on India at any cost."

Unhappily for India and Sher Ali, all such warnings from the greatest of Anglo-Indian statesmen fell unheeded on a Government headed by the author of "Tancred," on a Council swayed by the sophistries of Sir H. Rawlinson and Sir B. Frere. The old craze about Russian aggression was once more to over-rule the pleadings of common honesty, justice, and prudence. So long as Lord Northbrook governed India, all attempts to set aside the old policy of peace and watchfulness were steadily thwarted or kept in abeyance. But in the spring of 1876 that able and upright ruler resigned his post, rather than obey the renewed commands of the India Office to undo the work of the past twenty years. His successor, Lord Lytton, became from the first a willing tool in the hands of those who had sent him out to replace a policy of goodwill and fair-dealing with a policy of intrigue and provocation.

His first step on the new road was the occupation of Quetta, an advanced post two hundred and fifty miles beyond its nearest supports, accessible only by crossing a wide desert and toiling through "a long, difficult, and in many places waterless pass, flanked all the way by wild and warlike tribes."* The obvious folly of such a move was heightened by the offence it naturally gave the Afghans, who could only take it as an obvious menace to Kándahár and Herát. As such too it was regarded by the Russian Government. The new Viceroy's next step was to demand from Sher Ali the free admission of English Agents into Afghan cities, on pain of consequences which might end in "wiping Afghanistan out of the map altogether."

The Conference at Peshâwar in 1877 between Sir Lewis Pelly and the Amir's Envoy marked another stage in the new game of bullying and bad faith. The sudden close of the Conference by Lord Lytton's order, at the moment when Sher Ali seemed about to yield the main point at issue, was followed some weeks later

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* Sir H. Lumsden's Minute of September 1868.

by the withdrawal of our native Agent from Kábul. Sher Ali was left free to ponder over Lord Lytton's insulting reference to the proverbial fate of the earthen pipkin between two iron pots.

Not being in the secrets of a very reticent Ministry, Lord Lawrence could only protest against pushing our outposts beyond the Bolán, and ask for enlightenment on the Pesháwar Conference and other matters which the Government chose to keep dark. For a time his worst misgivings were partially allayed by Lord Salisbury's misleading answer to certain questions put by the Duke of Argyll. On the 15th of June the Minister for India assured his hearers in the House of Lords that no attempt had been made to force an English Envoy upon the Amir of Kábul, that our relations with him had undergone no material change, and that his feelings were in no way embittered towards the British Government.* What he said was not quite true, but it served at any rate to baulk inquiry and to disarm

* See Parliamentary Reports in the daily papers of the 16th of June 1877.

suspicion. The official utterance was everywhere taken not for worthless paper, but for so much pure gold.

In the latter part of September 1878 all England was startled to hear that an English Mission on its way to Kábul had been turned back by threats and violence in the middle of the Khaibar Pass. There was little truth in the story as first telegraphed to this country; but the mis-statement served its purpose of inflaming the British mind against a ruler who had dared to withhold from an English Envoy the compliment he had lately paid to a Russian emissary. Before the facts of our quarrel with Sher Ali were fully revealed to us, as soon as the short term of grace allowed him by the Home Government had expired, our troops were moving across the frontier to exact redress for an insult which had never in fact been offered.

One of the first to raise his voice against these high-handed doings was Lord Lawrence, whose letter of the 27th of September to the "Times" pleaded earnestly for all due forbearance towards a ruler whose alleged discourtesies had been provoked by our own shortcomings. We had no right to force a

Mission upon him against his will, in the teeth of all former pledges, and of every moral consideration which justified the Amir's resistance to a dangerous demand. By preparing and despatching the Mission without first securing Sher Ali's consent, we had provoked the consequent rebuff; and it behoved us, as the wrongdoers, to hold out to him some way of escape from a war whose end it was impossible to foresee, a war as ruinous to India's finances, as to the maintenance of a strong and friendly Afghan Power. "I insist"—he concluded—"that there will be no real dishonour to us in coming to terms with him; whereas, by pressing on him our own policy, we may incur most serious difficulties, and even disasters."

These were the words of age, but of age that still glowed with the fire of youth. Lord Lawrence knew as well as anyone that we could easily "clear the defiles and valleys of Afghánistán from end to end of their defenders, and that no force of Afgháns could stand against our troops when properly brought to bear against them." But he also knew that the game was not worth the cost of playing it, that our real difficulties would begin when the war was over; and to those difficulties he could see no end.

In subsequent letters written in reply to opponents, he continued his brave appeal to the people of England against the folly of their rulers. Again and again he pointed out that no good whatever could be gained by an Afghán war, especially a war based on grounds of obvious injustice; that our old frontier, remarkably strong by nature, could be further strengthened at a moderate cost; and that any advance beyond that frontier would only weaken our means of defence against foreign assailants. The Afgháns, he said, "will never cease to resist as long as they have a hope of success, and when beaten down, have that kind of elasticity which will ever lead them to renew the struggle whenever opportunity of so doing may recur. . . . We want them as friends and not as enemies." As for our quarrel with Sher Ali, he maintained in view of all that had lately passed, that "to go to war with him for refusing to receive our Mission, or for the rectification of our frontier, or indeed for any other cause which can at present be fairly brought against him, would be a gross injustice and a grave stigma on the character of the English nation."

Nor did Lord Lawrence confine himself to

writing letters. In spite of his failing health he consented to serve as chairman of the Afghán Committee, formed in November for the purpose of preventing the war which Lord Lytton was impatient to begin. On the 16th of November he wrote to Lord Beaconsfield, begging him to receive a deputation from the Committee, in the hope of inducing him to delay the opening of war until Parliament at least had given its sanction thereto. The Premier's answer was a refusal conveyed in language which read like a continuous sneer. Before Parliament met in December, all chance of a peaceful settlement had passed away, and our troops were marching as enemies through the country of our old ally.

Before the end of November those Afghan papers, for which Lord Lawrence had vainly asked in 1877, were published—too late to arrest the triumph of wrong-doing, but not too late to open men's eyes to the grossness of the wrong done. Sher Ali's timely death in the early part of 1879 paved the way for negotiations with his son Yákub, which resulted in the Treaty of Gandamak; a treaty which gave India a frontier so rectified as to weaken her defensive strength, and bound the new Amir

to receive and protect an English Resident at Kábul. Lord Lawrence lived to know that the war he had tried so hard to avert was over, and that our troops were quietly falling back behind the new frontier. But he did not live to hear of the storm that so soon followed that delusive calm, to see his predictions fulfilled in the Nemesis which hurried Cavagnari to a violent death, and roused the slumbering lions of Afghan hatred against the Faranghi invaders of their native hills.

On the 19th of June 1879 Lord Lawrence spoke for the last time in the House of Lords. The Indian Budget had come up for discussion. His once strong frame bowed down by illness, his eye-sight nearly gone, and his voice audible only to a few, he protested against the remission of the cotton duties as a needless sacrifice of revenue at the wrong time, and denounced the new Licence Tax as an impost which pressed unduly on the means of the poorer classes.

On the 27th of the same month the most famous Anglo-Indian statesman since Warren Hastings passed away to his rest. His remains were buried in Westminster Abbey, but the honour of a public funeral was not reserved for the man who had dared to plead the cause

of honesty and fair-play against a policy of high-handed cowardice. His memory however remains enshrined in the hearts of all those who have never followed the political fashion of the hour; and many of those who turned a deaf ear to his later utterances have already begun to acknowledge their mistake. As time goes on and events reveal themselves in their true bearings and proportions, as Englishmen come to know more about the men who made or upheld our Indian Empire, the fair fame of John Lawrence will rise higher and higher above the mists of prejudice and party rancour, and he will be remembered not only as the saviour of India in her worst need, but as the wise and successful ruler of a wide dominion, as the clear-headed, just, and fearless counsellor, whose advice it was always dangerous to neglect, and whose whole career was a quiet protest against the notion, in these days so rife, that honesty and justice have no place in the world of practical politics.

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